

# ORT Day 2021

## The ORT Story: Activity plans

This year we have developed a selection of activities for students between the ages of 12 and 18 years to learn more about ORT.

Each of the activities is based on the movie "The ORT Story". Students are not expected to watch the full movie, only selected parts that correspond with each activity.

**Link to the movie:** <https://www.ort.org/en/ort-day-2021/>

*Select 'ORT History Video Lesson' from the dropdown menu*

We expect that teachers can make decisions about which of the activities would be most useful for their students. An approximate indication of the time required for each one is included.

### **Activity 1: THE BEGINNINGS OF ORT**

(15-20 minutes)

In the Jewish tradition, the highest level of Tzedakah (charity/justice) is helping people to earn their own living so that they are not dependent on others.

We will see that ORT helped many Jews in the Pale of Settlement (a limited area where Jews were allowed to settle in Imperial Russia) to escape poverty and some were able to move their families out of the region and begin new lives.

#### **Watch: 00:00 to 02:00**

Why do you think ORT was created at that specific time and location?

#### **Research:**

Find a map of the Pale of Settlement. Which countries are within this region today?

Which languages did the Jewish population in that region speak?

What restrictions were placed on Jews by the government?

#### **Watch: 02:00 to 02:45**

Who were the founders of ORT?

How did they use their influence with government and with the Jewish population to establish the organisation?

#### **Reflect:**

Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, how did ORT affect the lives of Jewish people who were able to receive education and training?

**Activity 2: FROM THE 1920s TO THE 1950s**

(15-20 minutes)

The early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were notable for ORT’s spread beyond the Pale of Settlement in response to a growing need across Europe for the training courses that ORT could provide.

Several of ORT’s national organisations around the world are now celebrating their 100-year anniversaries, for example ORT France (2020), ORT UK (2021) and ORT America (2022).

**Watch: 02:45 to 04:45**

What kinds of training are the ORT students of that period receiving?

**Complete:**

The timeline below showing ORT’s movements in the 1920s and 1930s is incomplete. Use the mixed-up facts below and what you hear in the movie, plus any additional information of your own, to fill in the empty boxes.

You can find a timeline here that may be helpful: [www.ort.org/en/about-ort/history/](http://www.ort.org/en/about-ort/history/)

<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Where</b>
1880	ORT is founded	St Petersburg, Russia
1914-18	World War I	Global
1920		
1921		
1930s		
1938		

<b>Mixed-up facts</b>
ORT’s central office moved from St Petersburg ORT starts to expand outside Russia ORT became active in Western Europe ORT’s central office moved to Berlin France and Germany ORT is no longer allowed to operate in Russia To Paris World ORT Union is established in Berlin To Poland and Baltic States

**Extension:**

Try creating your own multimedia timeline for free using Sutori:

[www.sutori.com/schools](http://www.sutori.com/schools)

**Watch: 04:45 to 05:30**

At the end of the 1930s, as Europe headed towards a second World War, the situation for many Jewish communities looked very bleak. Besides the training, ORT's programs in Hungary, Romania, Poland (particularly in the ghettos) and elsewhere, offered people a sense of hope and solidarity.

**Watch 05:30 to 06:40**

Who were the Displaced Persons and what problems did they face after the war?

**Extension:**

There is a 1948 movie about ORT's work in the DP Camps called "Passport to Freedom".

*Note: the movie contains distressing scenes unsuitable for younger students.*

You can find this and learn much, much more about the DP Camps at our website:

<https://dpcamps.ort.org>

### **Activity 3: ORT AROUND THE WORLD**

There are five sections to this activity, each can be completed independently of the others.

- (a) World ORT in Israel (10m)
- (b) ORT in Latin America (10m)
- (c) ORT in the former Soviet Union (10m)
- (d) ORT in South Africa (5m)
- (e) ORT in France (5m)

#### **(a) World ORT in Israel**

From the very beginning ORT has always helped Jewish communities needing the most support. Through education and training ORT gives them the skills to change their lives so that they and their communities can prosper.

**Watch: 06:45 to 09:00 and then from 14:30 to 16:30**

Why does World ORT operate in the peripheral regions in Israel?

Tair from Israel talks about her positive experiences of STEM education and participating in Robotics competitions.

Have you or has someone you know gained opportunities and experiences from being part of ORT?

#### **Reflect:**

What does it mean to you to be a part of ORT?

Where do you hope your studies will take you?

#### **(b) ORT in Latin America**

Currently there are ORT and ORT-affiliated schools, ORT programs and activities running in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Cuba, Mexico, Panama, Peru and Uruguay.

**Watch 09:00 to 10:50 and then from 17:00 to 17:30**

In what year was the first ORT school established in Latin America?

Who were the new immigrants into this region at that time?

How does Ilai describe his education at ORT Argentina?

How does Judy describe what she sees when she visits ORT Argentina?

#### **Reflect:**

How is your own experience similar and how is it different?

**(c) ORT in the former Soviet Union**

Although the Soviet authorities forced ORT to close down its activities there in 1938, by the end of the 1980's there were changes beginning to appear. During the 1990's ORT played a hugely important role in re-connecting the Jewish communities across the region to their Jewish heritage. Currently there are 16 ORT schools in the former Soviet Union together with many programs and courses for adults.

**Watch 10:50 to 14:30, and then from 15:30 to 18:45**

Mikhail from Russia talks about some of the difficult experiences he had growing up as a Jew in the Soviet Union.

When did ORT return to the country of its birth, Russia?

Why were Mikhail's parents unsure about sending him to a Jewish school?

How did the focus on technology education contribute to ORT's success in the region?

**Reflect:**

What do you think the priorities were for ORT in trying to provide Jewish schools at that time?

**(d) ORT in South Africa**

Since its foundation in 1936, ORT South Africa was a fundraising organisation which collected money for ORT projects worldwide. From 1994, with the change of government and huge resulting social change, ORT South Africa's have focused on projects helping disadvantaged communities in and around Cape Town and Johannesburg.

**Watch 19:00 to 21:10**

What types of work does ORT do in South Africa?

What Jewish principal guides ORT's support for the development of communities that are not Jewish?

**(e) ORT in France**

ORT began operating in France in 1921 to provide training courses for Jewish people and to help them find employment, from the 1930's onwards they supported many newly-arrived refugees from Germany and Central Europe. ORT France expanded from the mid-1950s and throughout the 1960s and 1970s to offer education and training to newly arrived Jews from North Africa.

**Watch 22:00 to 23:00**

How did ORT France help people in need during the difficult chapters of Jewish experience in the 20<sup>th</sup> century?

What types of training can you see being provided in the pictures?

## **Activity 4: EDUCATING FOR LIFE**

(20-25 minutes)

ORT's mission from the very beginning has been to develop the potential of young people so they can lead fulfilling lives and have a positive impact on the world around them.

### **Watch 23:45 to 29:20 and then from 30:15 to 32:15**

How do Ilai and Mikhail describe the support they received from ORT in addition to what they learned in the classroom?

What did Maria gain from her educational experience with ORT in South Africa? Who benefits from Maria's work?

What has been ORT's impact on Tair, Mikhail and Ilai?

### **Watch 29:20 to 30:15 and then from 32:45 to 33:25**

What does Judy mean when she compares ORT to an "even-up"?

What does Avi mean when he compares ORT to a GPS system?

How does Maria describe ORT?

### **Reflect:**

What type of object would you use to describe ORT? Why?

### **Watch 34:05 to 37:45**

Why does Marc want to pay back his debt to ORT?

Do you agree with Ilai that Education is the best gift a child can receive?

### **Reflect:**

Do you think the mission of ORT is still relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

**Activity 5: REFLECTIONS ON THE MOVIE**

(15-20 minutes plus time taken to watch the movie)

Fill in the table below:

What did you already know about ORT’s history and activities before watching the video?	What have you learnt about ORT’s history and activities that you didn’t know before?	What would you like to find out more about after seeing the movie?

**Reaction Journal**

After watching the movie, what did you think/wonder/feel/understand...

Think	Wonder	Feel	Understand

If you were making your own documentary about ORT:

Who would you interview?

Who would be the presenters?

Which people would be most important to hear from?

Which parts of ORT’s story would you focus on?