



Discovering and Documenting England's Lost Jews

Education Pack





Education Pack

The Discovering and Documenting England's Lost Jews project, supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, aims to explore and document the hidden histories of the Sephardi Jews, who came to England during the 17th Century.

The Lost Jews Education Pack offers an accessible introduction to the topic, and a range of creative activities responding to the Sephardi legacy. Each of the main sections includes an info sheet, activity sheet and creative writing task template.

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Unscramble the timeline

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Petitioning Oliver Cromwell for permission to stay

THE NOVO CEMETERY

Asking for the right to open a cemetery



Timeline Mix Up

The Timeline has become mixed up. Draw a line connecting the events on the right to their correct position on the Timeline.

1200

1655

Menasseh Ben Israel arrived in London and petitioned Oliver Cromwell for Jewish rights.

1509

After the expulsions from Spain and Portugal, a few Sephardi Crypto-Jews settled in London and practised Judaism in secret.

1500

1753

The Jew Bill was passed to help foreign Jews become English but antisemitic riots led to its repeal later in 1753.

1600

1656

Oliver Cromwell gave permission for Jewish merchants in London to meet for prayers.

1290

Expulsion of Jews from England by King Edward 1.

1701

Bevis Marks synagogue opens.

1700

1657

The first Sephardi Cemetery was opened in Mile End - Velho Cemetery.

1635

Antonio Fernandez Carvajal came to London. He lived as a Spanish Catholic merchant, practising his Judaism in secret.

1800



Trouble in Spain and Portugal

The Spanish Inquisition started in 1478. King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella wanted everyone to believe in the Catholic religion. Jews living in Spain were told to either become a Christian and get baptised or leave Spain. People were burnt alive in front of large crowds if they were caught practising Judaism in secret. Many Jews fled to Portugal but they were not safe there for long as the Portuguese Monarchy started their own inquisition.

Jews from Spain and Portugal were expelled, fled or forcibly converted. Some travelled to London to start new lives. Jews with a Spanish or Portuguese heritage are called **SEPHARDI**



FORCED CONVERSION
Being forced to change your religion or beliefs to a different religion or belief.

HERETIC
A person whose beliefs are considered wrong because they are different to what is accepted by most people.

PERSECUTION
Treating others in a cruel way due to their religion or because they are different.

**CONVERT
DEPART
OR DIE**





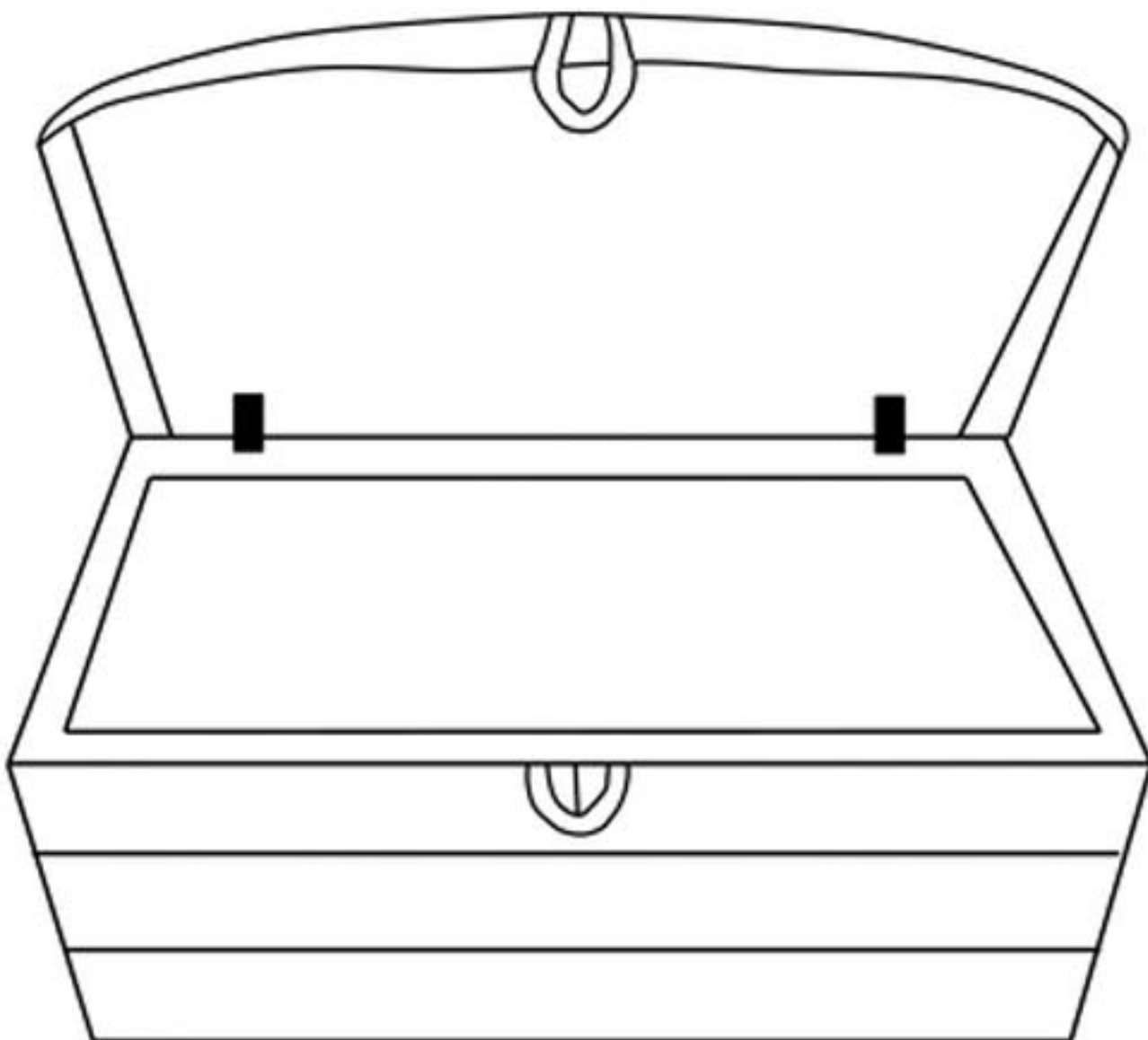
THE LOST JEWS

Expulsion

Imagine you are being forced to flee Spain for your own safety. Can you complete these tasks?

Precious Objects

Imagine you are being forced to leave your home and country. Collect a selection of objects from around your home that are important to you and you would choose to take. Draw pictures of the objects in the chest below.



To stay or to go?

You can't decide whether to leave Spain or stay. Think of 5 reasons why you should stay and 5 reasons why you should go. Which would you choose?

Persecution

Can you think of other people who have been persecuted for their beliefs?

Dear Diary...

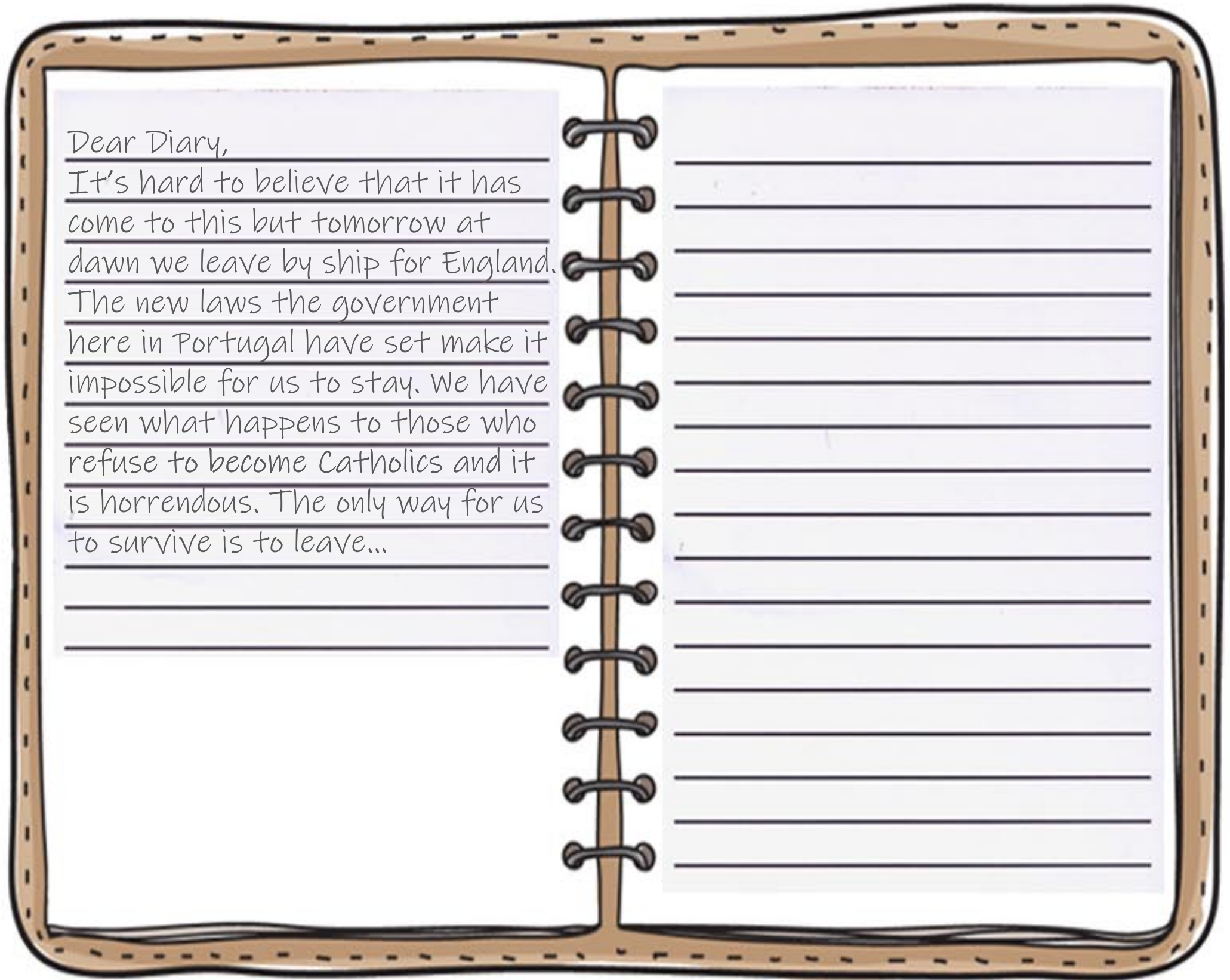
Complete the diary entry on the following page.



THE LOST JEWS

Dear Diary...

It's the night before you have to leave Portugal to travel by boat to England. Complete the diary entry below. Write about the horrors you have seen, your hopes and dreams for the future and a new life in London.



Dear Diary,
It's hard to believe that it has come to this but tomorrow at dawn we leave by ship for England. The new laws the government here in Portugal have set make it impossible for us to stay. We have seen what happens to those who refuse to become Catholics and it is horrendous. The only way for us to survive is to leave...





The Journey

From the end of the 15th Century Sephardi Jews travelled from Spain and Portugal to many different countries. These refugees journeyed over land, and some escaped by sea. These Jews took their Judeo-Iberian culture with them. Look at the map below and trace the journeys made to different countries. Can you find the route that took Sephardi Jews to England?



IBERIAN PENINSULA

The South West part of Europe, mainly Spain and Portugal.

LADINO

Ladino is a language once commonly spoken by Sephardim whose ancestors fled Spain. It is also called **Judeo - Spanish**.

MIGRATION

People travelling to a new place to live.

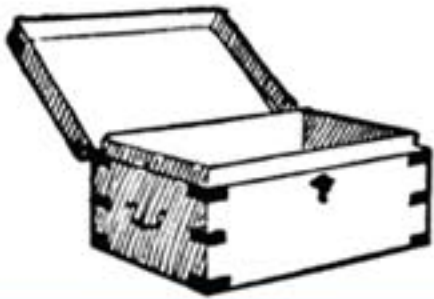


The Journey

Imagine that you are a Sephardi Jew travelling to London to start a new life. Can you complete these tasks?

Travel Plans

Use a cardboard box to make a travel trunk. This is what would have carried your possessions to England. Can you make some objects to go inside it?



Act It

Act out the journey you took to get to London. Did you travel by land or sea?

Mapping

Mark out your journey from Spain to London on the map below. Write a paragraph about the journey.







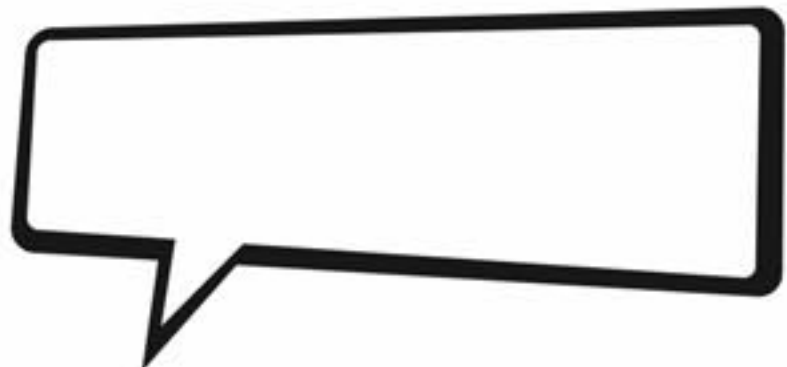
Your Journey

Create a comic of your journey to London. Use the template on the next page.





Create a comic showing the journey you took from Spain to London. Who did you meet along the way? What obstacles did you face?

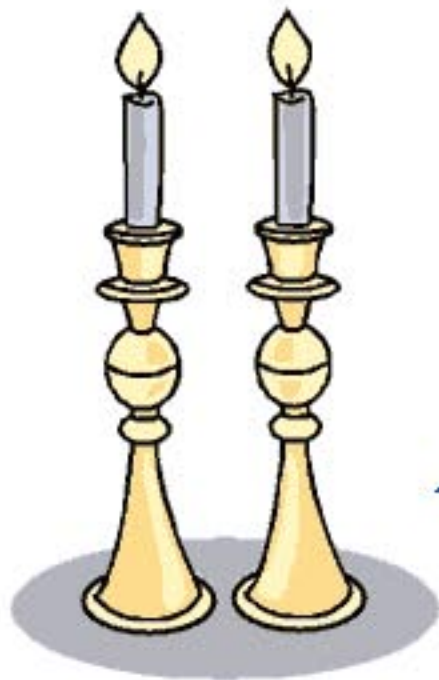
<p>Spain...</p> 	 
	
	 <p>London...</p>



Hiding and Secrecy

A group of Sephardi Jewish merchants arrived in London from Spain and Portugal in the 17th Century. They lived as Marranos or Crypto-Jews. This meant that they outwardly lived as Christians but still practised Judaism in secret. Crypto-Jews were unable to tell outsiders that they were Jewish. Parts of the City of London became home to a secret and hidden community made up of several Jewish merchants and their families.

Despite the danger of being found out, Crypto-Jews in London continued to meet and perform Jewish rituals in secret. Many even attended Mass at the Chapel of the Spanish Ambassador



Light the Sabbath candles in a room where no one can see the light!

CLANDESTINE

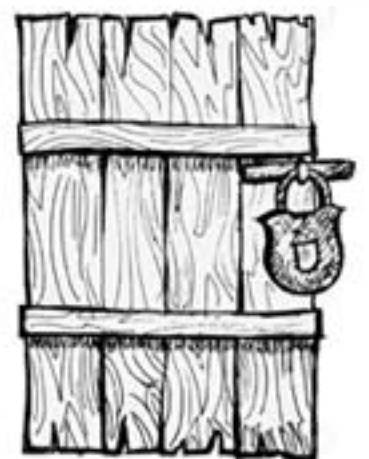
Something hidden or kept secret, often because it is illegal.

MERCHANT

A person who buys and sells goods especially on a large scale or with foreign countries.

CRYPTO-JEW

A Jew who converted to Christianity to escape persecution but continued to practise Judaism secretly.





Hiding and Secrecy

Imagine that you are a member of a Sephardi Crypto-Jewish family and have recently arrived in London. Can you complete these tasks?

Keep it Secret...

Write a secret message to a family friend about an important festival coming up. Use invisible ink. Dip a cotton bud in lemon juice and write your message. Wait for it to dry. When it's ready to read hold it up to the light to see the words.

Inside and Out

Draw a circle. On the inside write /draw all the things you would do in secret at home. On the outside put things you would do in public.

Keep it Locked!

Draw the other half of the key hole below and colour it in. Keep the door locked!

Crypto

Write an Acrostic poem on the next page. Use the word CRYPTO.





Write an Acrostic poem using the word CRYPTO. Start each line of your poem with the letter from the word Crypto.



Oliver Cromwell

Oliver Cromwell was Lord Protector and a military and political leader in England. In March 1656 a group of Sephardi Jews, led by Menasseh Ben Israel, signed a petition asking Cromwell for permission to hold Jewish services and to lease land for a Jewish cemetery. Oliver Cromwell gave this group of Jewish merchants permission to meet for prayers in their private houses and to get land for a cemetery in East London.



You can meet for prayers and open a cemetery

LORD PROTECTOR
Title Cromwell received in 1653 giving him the position of ruler of England.



Menasseh Ben Israel

PETITION
A formal written request given to people in positions of power.



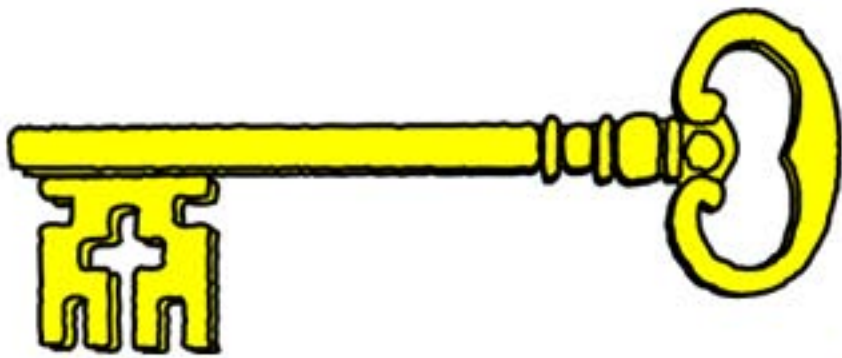
THE LOST JEWS

Oliver Cromwell

Imagine that you are a Sephardi Jew who has arrived in London at the time of Cromwell. Can you complete these tasks?

Powers of Persuasion

Imagine someone in your family is Oliver Cromwell. Try and persuade them to give you the key to the site for a new cemetery.



Portrait

Draw a portrait of Oliver Cromwell in the frame below.

Quills

Find a feather and make a quill. Try writing in an old fashioned style with your quill.

Dear Sir...

Write a letter to Cromwell on the next page asking for permission to open a synagogue. Why is it important?



Write a petition to Oliver Cromwell asking for permission to open a synagogue. Include why this is so important.

*To His Highness
The Lord, Protector
Oliver Cromwell*



The Novo Cemetery

Without their own cemetery Jews in London had to be buried in Christian graveyards. The first Sephardi Jewish burial ground opened in 1657 and was called the Velho cemetery. When this cemetery became full the Novo cemetery opened and the first burials took place there in 1733. The Novo cemetery can still be visited today and is located in the grounds of Queen Mary University in Mile End.

The Novo Cemetery is filled with flat gravestones without any upright memorials. This is to represent the equality of all people in death. Families are often buried together in the same row.



Carved hands on graves show where descendants of Aharon (older brother of Moses) are buried.



A carved palm tree cut down by a hand from heaven shows that a life has been cut short.



THE LOST JEWS

The Novo Cemetery

Imagine that you are a Sephardi Jew who lived near the Novo cemetery when it first opened. Can you complete these tasks?

You are in the Novo cemetery. Use your 5 senses. What can you see, hear, smell, feel, taste?

Boxing Champion

Daniel Mendoza was a Jewish boxer buried in the cemetery. Imagine you are at one of his fights. What's it like? Imagine that you are on the sports news giving a live account of the fight.



Who is it?

Look at the photo of a grave from the cemetery. What information can you discover? Can you imagine what this person's life would have been like? Can you create a character for them and act out a day in their life?



Body Snatchers!

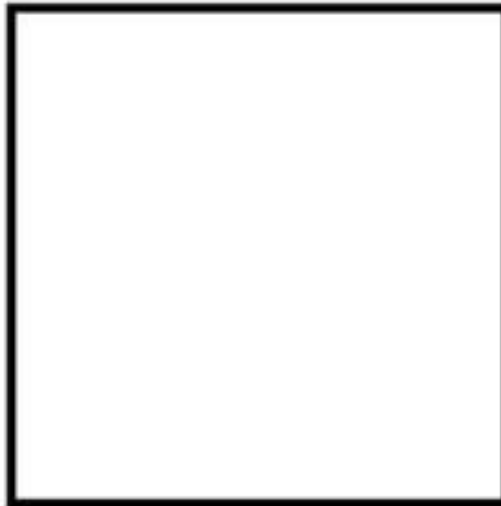
Grave robbers used to try and steal bodies from the cemetery. Special guards were put on duty to try and stop this happening. On the next page write a newspaper report about the grave robberies.

October 27th, 1786

MYSTERY BODY SNATCHERS!



A series of mysterious night time events have occurred at the Novo Jewish cemetery in Mile End. Graves have been damaged and there have been rumours of bodies being taken. Cemetery guards have been appointed and given a watch house, as well as a moveable hut fitted with alarm bells that can be placed over every new grave. Guards have been discovered drunk while on duty and also fast asleep. The most recent report of a disturbance was on 25th October when men were seen entering the cemetery at midnight and...



Finish writing the news report above. Write about what the men did. Why do you think they were there? Why did they want to steal a body? What did they do with it?