



A student searches for a microfilm reel during a History Unfolded research sprint at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library in Washington, DC. *US Holocaust Memorial Museum*

Guide to Hosting a History Unfolded **RESEARCH SPRINT**

UNITED STATES
HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL
MUSEUM 2018 25

   #HistoryUnfolded

HISTORY UNFOLDÉD
US NEWSPAPERS AND THE HOLOCAUST

newspapers.ushmm.org

HISTORY UNFOLDED

US NEWSPAPERS AND THE HOLOCAUST

History Unfolded: US Newspapers and the Holocaust is a nationwide effort to uncover what local newspapers reported about Holocaust-related events during the 1930s and 1940s. Together, we can discover and learn more than any one of us could alone. In this spirit, many participants have enjoyed hosting “research sprints,” where groups of citizen historians gather to research one or more events in a specific collection of newspapers. Usually, research sprints are held for a few hours at a library, archive, or historical society where newspaper collections are readily accessible. Occasionally, groups engage in “virtual sprints” where participants agree to research a specific event or events during a defined time period using online collections. Sometimes, sprints combine both approaches.

History Unfolded participants find sprints exciting and motivating. Sometimes participants compete within the group to see who can find the most articles. The event reinforces the sense of participating in a community effort that is larger than oneself. At the end of a sprint, the group can assess what it found (or didn’t find), celebrate and share their findings with each other, and through discussion learn more about the research process and the history itself. The step-by-step guide that follows will help you plan your own research sprint.

1. Find a partner

We’ve had success partnering with libraries as host sites. You’ll want to find a library or historical society that either has a collection of 1930s and 1940s newspapers on microfilm and microfilm readers, or access to a range of databases that include newspapers from that time. Make sure there are enough terminals for the number of people you’re hoping to have participate, and that you’ll be able to reserve them for your event. If you’re at a university, your students may have access to databases on their own computers as well.

2. Set a date and time

Set aside several hours for your research sprint. You’re going to want time to explain the background of the project and the goals for the event, divide up the research, have ample time to conduct the research, and leave room for a debrief afterwards. (We’ve found that last part also works well over dinner and drinks.) Note that microfilm research generally takes longer than research in online databases.

3. Decide what you want to research

The best research sprints have focus. These may be determined by the resources you have available to you. Some things to consider:

- Do you have a lot of different newspapers available? You can plan your sprint around a historical event or a series of consecutive events (see newspapers.ushmm.org/events/events-all for the full list), assigning each participant a different newspaper to research for those events. This is also useful if your sprint falls near an event anniversary.
- Do you want to focus on one particular location? We’ve had success organizing events in which we do a deep dive into the papers of one state or a few states.
- Do you have access to an online database, like ProQuest Historical Newspapers or newspapers.com? You can ask participants to research papers from states that aren’t well represented on History Unfolded. This also allows you to involve participants who aren’t in the room with you.
- Do you have access to collections that represent a unique community: a university, ethnic group, or language group? We strive for History Unfolded to include newspapers that represent Americans of all backgrounds.
- Finally, ensure that you look at the research already submitted to the project (newspapers.ushmm.org/search) to see what, if anything, has already been submitted for the newspapers you’ll be using. If possible, focus your research sprint on areas, events, or newspapers that will not replicate research already in the database.

4. Promote your event

Consider whom you can reach through e-mail lists, social media, or flyers. Let people know where and when the event will take place, and provide a link where they can RSVP for the event, so you can contact them ahead of it. We've attached a sample RSVP form; we use Google Forms to create ours, so that we automatically have a spreadsheet of people we can contact.

5. Gather your materials

This kit comes with:

- PDFs of event module descriptions, dates, and keywords
- Step-by-step instructions for your research sprint participants
- A template to guide individual participants in their research
- Photo release forms—please have your participants sign these if you take photos during your event and would like the Museum to be able to share them

You'll also want:

- Nametags
- Pens and markers
- A sign-in sheet
- USB thumb drives for saving articles from microfilm readers

6. One week before: Send intro emails

When you write to people who have RSVP'd for your event, remind them of when and where the event will take place and share any particular entry or sign-in requirements at the venue. Ask participants to create an account on the History Unfolded website before they arrive (newspapers.ushmm.org; click "Create Account"); this will save time at your event because participants can simply add their articles to their profiles.

Give directions to your meeting location and details on how to find the group once people arrive.

Also, please email the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum team at historyunfolded@ushmm.org, so that we know to be ready for your research to come in and so we can answer any questions you have.

7. Two days before: Walkthrough of the venue

Gather at the venue with any volunteers or staff who will be helping with the event and answer the following questions:

- Where will people check in and receive their nametags?
- Where will people sign up to research a particular newspaper or event and receive their research materials?
- If you're using microfilm, where will people pick it up? If possible, ask the librarian to pull relevant microfilm reels ahead of time. This expedites the research process.
- Are there computers you need to make sure are reserved for your event, if it is happening during hours the venue is open to the public?
- Who is going to be the point person for each of these areas, and who will help participants if they have questions about researching?
- How will you direct participants between these areas?
- We've set up an "Ask a Historian" table at some of our events, where curators or historians familiar with this history are available to answer questions or provide research tips. If you're going to do this, make sure you know where it will be.
- If you have time and haven't done research in this space before, try out the research process yourself. That way, you can figure out logistics and answer participants' questions.

8. Making the big day run smoothly

If you didn't divide up responsibilities during your walkthrough, do so before your participants arrive. You want someone to check people in, someone to greet and direct them, someone to give an overview of the project and give out research materials, and someone to help with research and microfilm use. About half an hour before the end of your sprint, make sure people who have not been working on Internet-enabled computers have time to upload their articles to the project website.

A few tips:

- Ask participants to look in the database of existing research (newspapers.ushmm.org/search) to make sure they're not uploading a duplicate article.
- Make sure participants are uploading an image for every submission they make. Each image should include the full page on which the newspaper article sits, so that the name of the paper, page number, and publication date are also visible.
- Review the About this Project page (newspapers.ushmm.org/about/project) so you can answer questions about the project.

Here's a sample timeline for a short sprint. If you're using microfilm, you'll want to allot at least an extra half-hour for research.

4:15 p.m.: Arrive to set up and walk through the space.

4:30 p.m.: Participants arrive and receive materials. Research begins.

6:15 p.m.: Research ends. Participants upload articles to the site.

6:30 p.m.: Sprint ends. Debrief begins.

7:15 p.m.: Debrief ends. Clean-up begins.

7:30 p.m.: Clean-up ends. Celebration!

9. E-mail us and tell us about your sprint

The History Unfolded team is also here to answer your questions. You can reach us at historyunfolded@ushmm.org, or by phone at **202.382.0211**. Good luck and have fun.

Questions for Framing Post-Sprint Debrief Discussion

1. What surprised you the most about your research?
2. For the events you chose to research, did you find that there was more or less reporting than you expected?
3. What questions did your research findings raise for you about American responses to the Holocaust?
4. During your research, what did you learn about your community during the 1930s and 1940s (or the locality of the newspaper you chose)?
5. Would you like to do this again?

Sample Research Sprint RSVP Form

History Unfolded Research Sprint

Join the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum for a research sprint at the Library of Congress on January 12 from 4:00-7:00 pm (drop in any time) in the Newspaper & Current Periodical Reading Room (Madison building, room 133). We'll be researching coverage of the Holocaust from Alaskan newspapers, from 1933 to 1945.

Sign up today!

Questions? Contact Malea Walker at the Library of Congress: mayoung@loc.gov.

* Required

Name (First and last) *

Your answer

Email address *

Your answer

How did you hear about this event? *

- Flyer at Library of Congress
- Email
- Twitter
- Facebook
- Word of mouth
- I attended a previous History Unfolded research sprint
- Other: _____

I'd like to join the research team for dinner and debrief at a local Capitol Hill restaurant after the sprint. *

- Yes!
- No
- I'll get back to you

SUBMIT

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.