

2025 Heritage Fair Questionnaire Guide

Temple Emanu-El

Your Name: _____

Kitah Vav

Instructions: This guide is to help you research your heirloom story.

It is not required, but can be used as needed to *help you* gather information to write the story about your family history and your heirloom.

If you cannot get all the details, that's okay, just do the best that you can. Use

1. What is your family heirloom?
2. Where was your heirloom made? (Which city? Which country? Was it made by a well-known company? Was it handmade?)
3. What year, exact date, or general time period was your heirloom made, bought, or acquired? (If it is an approximate date, write “circa” followed by the approximate date. Example: Around the 1930s is written circa 1930.)
4. What is the importance of the **time period** of your heirloom? **Examples:**
 - Was this heirloom bought or given to a family member because of a **bris, bar mitzvah, graduation, or wedding, etc.**?
 - Perhaps it was a Purple Heart Medal for fighting in a war?
 - Is it an object your family brought on the boat when they **immigrated** to Ellis Island? -- something like a kitchen pot or Shabbat candles or the travel papers and passport?
5. **Describe** the heirloom object and **include special details** like engravings, colors, shapes, big and small details. Write if it is in good or bad condition. **Details will help the reader know how the object looks, feels, smells and tastes** (some students have made food from heirloom recipes for the fair!).

Examples of detailed description heirlooms:

- a 19-inch handmade **olive wood** statue of Moses. Notice the removable staff in Moses' right hand which he holds over his head and the exquisite carving of his eyes.”
- “An engagement ring made from 18-karat yellow gold with six rubies designed in the shape of a heart. This ring is small, designed for the slender finger of my great-grandmother Shoshanna, who played the piano.”
- “An aluminum pot scratched from years of Goldie, my *bubbie* (grandmother), cooking chicken matzah ball soup for Shabbos and holidays. Notice the long black rubber handle that kept her from getting burned.)

6. What is the story of how and when your family member(s) acquired the heirloom? ****This is a very important part of the story! Get a lot of information.**

7. What is the **full name of the person** who first got the heirloom object?
Instead of writing: “my grandma,” introduce this person by his or her first and last name: **Example:** “*Channah Chaya Mendelssohn, my grandmother.*”

(When you write your story, first write the full name, and then refer to her or him by their first name.)

Ex: *Channah gave this tablecloth to her daughter, Ruthie, in 1862 as a gift for Rosh HaShanah.”*

8. Did this person have a **nickname**? Do you know the origin of the nickname?
Example: My grandfather, Aaron Friedman, grew up being called “Ginji” because of his bright red hair.
9. How is the family member who **originally** received the object related to you?

10. **IMPORTANT:**

Find out everything you can about the person who received this heirloom.

Find out all the details:

Examples:

- a) What is the name of the city and country in which they were born and lived?
- b) Did they immigrate, and if so where to and **why**? If they immigrated by ship, do you know the name of the ship? Did they immigrate to find a job or because they were Zionists who wanted to build Israel?...
- c) What was their profession?
- d) Where did they work? Be as specific as you can.
- e) Who were their parents, children...?
- f) Did they have special hobbies and/or talents?
- g) Were they religious?
- h) What type of personality did they have?
- i) What were their hobbies?

11. Find information about the event and the importance of the event that led to this person getting the object and how it was used like a tallit for a bar mitzvah or an instrument for a business your relative started....
12. What values (and Jewish values) does this family heirloom teach you?
13. What did you learn about your family’s history and the Jewish culture through your heirloom? **For example**, did you learn about persistence, hard work,

strong feelings to Israel, a love of learning, devotion to the Jewish community, an optimistic way of looking at the world, love of creating art, etc.?

14. How does your family use the heirloom today, and how will it be used in the future?

Congratulations for getting the answers to these questions!!! Now write the story of the heirloom.