

Story Coach Guidelines

Checklist for Story Coach

- Help the author choose a subject
- Help the author register online at understandingworks.org
- Read both story coach's guidelines and writer's guidelines
- Help young author set up meeting or a Zoom with subject for interview
- Read interview tips
- Attend interview with the book subject and young author and take detailed notes
- If possible, take several pictures of the subject and author
- Ask family for 10-12 photos to include in the published storybook
- Complete the two-page biography from information learned at interview
- Edit the author's writing and actively advise on artwork
- Submit the book project at understandingworks.org

Suggested Timeline for Six-Week Writing Project

Week One:

- Learn about writing project, view website, and writer's guidelines
- Attend A BOOK by ME training class
- Choose a subject
- Register book project on website

Week Two:

- Introduction to subject's story
- Research (make sure your resources are reliable)
- Make a list of open-ended questions to ask the subject
- Arrange interview with subject

Week Three:

- Complete interview and send thank you note
- Choose book title and discuss artwork with illustrator
- Write ten-page script

Week Four:

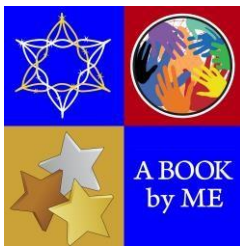
- Write and edit ten-page script
- Clearly mark Page 1, Page 2, Page 3, etc.
- Share text with artist and discuss artwork for book cover
- Edit work with Story Coach

Week Five:

- Illustrate one piece of art for each page (plus cover art)
- Scan each illustration naming each file according to page it illustrates

Week Six:

- Complete including About the Author and About the Illustration Page and Dear Reader
- Have Story Coach submit project



Story Coach Guidelines

Interview

- Arrange a meeting in person or via Zoom. Tell subject the interview typically takes an hour.
- Subject should be notified to bring 10-12 photos of their youth, teen years, service time, and their family. If the subject does not have a digital copy of these photos, you can 1) take a clear picture of the photograph using a cell phone 2) stop at a copy center and immediately return them 3) take the photos home to scan and return the originals.
- Take several photos of the young author with their subject. Because it will be included in the book, please make sure photo is clear.
- Subject should be notified that they will need to sign a release. Bring a copy of the release with you for the subject to review. The official release will be sent with a copy of the subject's proof book during the first stage of publishing. Subject will have opportunity edit their storybook as needed.
- Take detailed notes so that you can write a two-page biography of the subject. Write down dates as well. They will be needed for the curriculum timeline.
- Ask permission to record the interview if you are able. It's beneficial if you have trouble remembering details later.
- Encourage the author to follow up with a thank you phone call or thank you card.

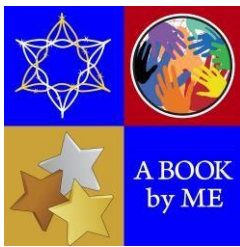
Writing

Encourage the author to type their book on a word document. They can easily edit it and note the ten pages so we know where to make page breaks. When they finish, they can copy and paste their work onto the online submission form. The responsibility of the story coach during the writing process is to answer any questions that the author has and edit their final draft. Give constructive criticism regarding the period of time if needed (especially with artwork).

Illustrations

Coach needs to watch the artwork for period clothing, military uniforms, housing, and buildings, etc. Artist can easily look on Google image and find what people were wearing and how roads looked in the early 1900s.

Illustrations are to be done on separate paper from the writing. The illustrator needs to use normal 8 ½ x 11 computer paper. The illustrator can use any art supplies. Usually, illustrators use markers, crayons, colored pencils, etc. The illustrations should be dark, so they are easy to scan. Bright, bold colors make the illustrations more appealing to readers. When they are finished, the 11 illustrations (10 for each page of the book and one for the cover) must be scanned. The picture files must be labeled as the page numbers so that we can easily match the illustrations to the correct page.



Story Coach Guidelines

Two-page Biography

 **Michelle Trop Rubovits**

"Once I really am in power, my first and foremost task will be the annihilation of the Jews."
-Adolf Hitler

When Michelle Trop was born on June 2, 1938, her family was living in the small village of Orleans, France, located about 30 miles southwest of Lyon. Her parents, Sonia and Jacob Trop, had moved to southern France in 1936. Before that they had lived in Gdansk, Poland. Jacob's and Sonia's families had lived in Poland for many generations. Jacob's father, his grandfather, and all his uncles had been bakers there. Although Jacob made a living in Orleans as a plumber, Michelle later recalled how good he was at baking because he grew up around bakers. She especially remembered that he made a wonderful jelly roll for Rosh Hashanah each year after the war.

An more and more restrictions were being placed on their lives as Jews living in Poland, the Trop's began to think of leaving. Riots in that country reflected a growing anti-semitism, and when Hitler took over Germany, they heard about the horrible things that were happening to the Jews there. So, when the Trop's moved to France, they thought they would be avoiding many of these problems. In the early 1930s, even before the Trop's moved to France, two of Sonia's aunts immigrated from Poland to the United States with their families, in order to escape persecution.

Between 1936 and 1939 life for the Trop family in Orleans was a happy one. Jacob's business as a plumber was going well, and Sonia enjoyed being a homemaker, caring for baby Michelle. Their home was in a two-story, C-shaped building, with Jacob's plumbing shop downstairs and the living quarters upstairs over the shop. Michelle remembers that beautiful flowerboxes were situated in every window across the top floor.

When German troops invaded Poland in the fall of 1939, Britain and France declared war on Germany. Jacob became increasingly concerned that France would fall under Nazi rule, which it eventually did. Of course, being Jewish meant the possibility of being sent to a concentration camp or being killed outright. At that time he decided to go underground and join the French resistance, so he arranged for Sonia and baby Michelle to live with a Catholic family on a remote farm in the French countryside.

Michelle was only one year old when she arrived at the farm with her mother, so she was too young to even remember having lived in Orleans before the war. She and her mother remained on the farm for the next six years. Her earliest memories are of life on the farm. The farmer's wife treated Sonia and Michelle as part of her family and told Nazi soldiers, when they came to inquire, that both husbands were away fighting in the French army. In order to protect

Michelle and her own life, Sonia didn't tell Michelle much about her father or even that she was Jewish. Sonia knew that if Michelle were questioned by anyone about these matters, she could answer truthfully without any knowledge of either.

That's why, when Michelle was questioned about her father by a Nazi soldier who came to the farm, she answered, "I haven't seen my father in a very, very long time."

Jacob visited Sonia at night several times over those six years, without Michelle ever knowing that he came and went. She happily played around the farm, climbing cherry trees in the orchard and taking care of her baby brother, Charles, who was born on November 10, 1942. Michelle remembered running to hide in the cherry orchard when her baby brother, whom she was supposed to be watching over, fell down an outside stairway. He was not badly injured, but Michelle knew she would be blamed for his fall. After her father returned in 1943, Michelle learned that Jacob had hidden in a cherry tree at one time to avoid being discovered by the Nazi soldiers who visited the farmhouse.

Although Michelle's father rarely mentioned his activities while fighting with the French Underground, he did tell a story about being captured one day along with some of his fellow partisans. They were put into a camp and then were forced to march in a line to what he thought was likely certain death. Realizing what was going on, he began looking for a way out. As the line moved past a small, wooden building, he noticed that a plumber had left his tools and coveralls behind. Carefully sneaking out of the line, he put on the coveralls, picked up the tools and some pipes lying nearby, and walked out of the camp right under the noses of the guards.

In the spring of 1945 when World War II ended in Europe, the Trop family moved back to Orleans to resume their life together there as a family. At seven years old, Michelle found out all about her father. Her first memory of discovering that she was Jewish was when the family celebrated Passover that spring, and her father brought out the Matzah. She knew nothing about Passover, had never seen Matzah before, and had not tasted chicken soup with matzo balls, like Sonia prepared. From that time onward, her family celebrated the Jewish holidays and Michelle began to learn Hebrew.

Spring of 1945 was also when Sonia's cousin, Mitchell, came to visit the family in Orleans. He was the son of one of Sonia's aunts who had immigrated to the United States from Poland in the early 1930s. Michelle remembered being in awe of this handsome American soldier when he visited her home, but she was also confused at first when she heard Sonia call him by name and give him a big hug. He was a most happy reunion, but Michelle couldn't understand what was said at that time because her parents spoke Yiddish, a language similar to German used mostly by Jews from Eastern Europe. Mitchell had obviously learned Yiddish from his parents. Otherwise, he would not have been able to communicate with Sonia and Jacob at that first meeting. Michelle later learned that her parents also spoke Polish, Russian, and German, and they read Hebrew.

With the help of Michelle's family in America as sponsors, the Trop family, including Jacob, Sonia, Michelle, Charles and another daughter, Anais, born October 11, 1946, were able to immigrate to the United States in 1950. Today, Michelle lives in Joliet, Illinois with her husband of 53 years, Rabbi Charles Rubovits. Before moving to Joliet, they lived in Rock Island, Illinois for many years, raising their two sons, David and Robert. They have four beautiful grandchildren: Sara Britna, Yakov, Kyle and Eva.

You need to attend the interview with the author. It would be best if you help the author set up the interview with the subject and proofread the questions that the author has prepared. During the interview, please take detailed notes. Include dates in the biography. The two-page biography is a more comprehensive version of the story. Check facts and dates to reassure the biography is historically

accurate. If there is not enough information about the subject, add research information that corresponds with the storyline. This biography should 1,000 – 1,200 words long.

Dear Reader Page

This page introduces the reader to the story but also has the potential to inspire a new young author. It is written as a letter to the reader from the author and illustrator. The first paragraph should introduce the young author and explain why they chose to do this project. The middle section needs to list the subject's name, date of birth, family members, favorite activities, and a few sentences about their story. The last paragraph is more thoughts from the young author. This space could be used to acknowledge the story coach and encourage future young authors. This page will include one of the old photos of the subject.

Dear Reader,

I'm from a small town in Illinois called Macomb. That's where the hero of our story, John Moon, lives, too. Western Illinois University is in our town, and the college is a big part of John's story. It was a big experience meeting John, writing his story and creating the artwork, too. It was a labor of love for a true American hero. Let me introduce you to John:

Name: John Moon

Born: April 3, 1916 in Macomb, Illinois

Family: John's father, Frank, was a contractor and mother, Sarah, was a housewife. Much more than that, she was well known for helping people in need. There were many hobos who came through town from the railroad tracks. Sarah always had a kind word and a bite to eat for them. She became known as "Mother Moon." Frank and Sarah had ten children, five girls and five boys.

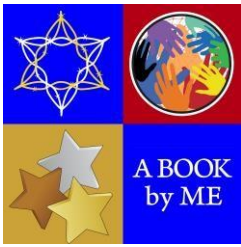
Story: After high school, John went to Western Illinois Teachers College (now called Western Illinois University) in Macomb. He graduated with a major in chemistry and got a good job at Caterpillar Inc. in Peoria. He was working there when he heard about the Japanese bombing Pearl Harbor. By this time he was married with one small child. Immediately, he knew he had to do his part to make the world a safer place for his little boy.

John Moon

Sitting at the table with John and listening to him talk about Pearl Harbor and his reaction to the bombing being to protect his family, I was in awe. He made the history books I've read real to me. John said he was inspired by his college football coach, Colonel Ray Hanson, a WWI and WWII hero. Like Coach Hanson, John joined the Marines because he felt it was best to fight in small groups. Now 103 years old, John still believes the Marines are more mobile and the best.

He fought alongside his fellow Marines at Iwo Jima, one of the bloodiest battles in history. John says he is one of the luckiest men in the world. I think I was lucky to meet him and share his story with you.

Mary Hammond
Young Author



Story Coach Guidelines

Book Summary

The story coach is responsible for the synopsis on the back of the book cover. It should only be a maximum of 250 words. Summarize the story in a way that will make the story appealing to young people.

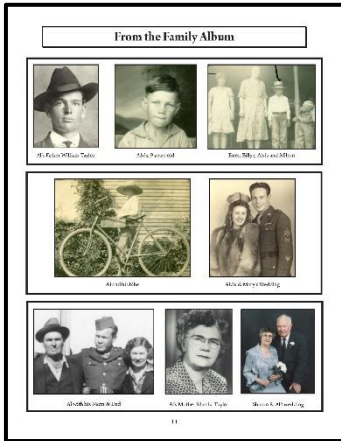
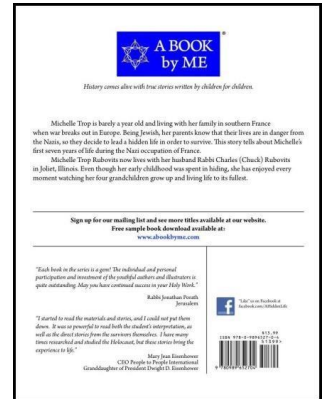


Photo Album

This page includes 10-12 photos of the subject. When submitting the photos at understandingworks.org, please name the picture file with the caption. For example, name the file according to who is in it and when or where it was taken.

Submissions

Submit all the work at understandingworks.org. Note: All submissions will be reviewed but not all will be published. All the information you need to submit your

Story Coach Submission Form is below. You will also need to fill out the Photo Submission form, which includes: 11 illustrations, 10-12 old photos of the subject, a photo with the author and subject, a headshot of the author, and a headshot of the illustrator.

Book Title _____

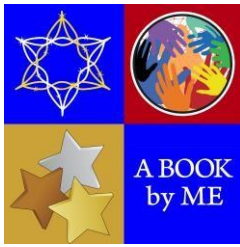
Author: _____

Illustrator: _____

Subject: _____

Check which series: Holocaust Human Rights Heroes

Dear Reader – Summarize the author’s reason for writing and thoughts about their experiences writing for A BOOK by ME. (Maximum 250 words)

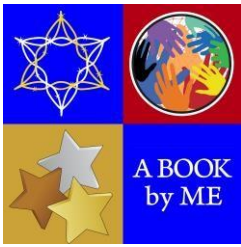


Story Coach Guidelines

Dear Reader – List the subject’s full name, date of birth, city and country of birth, family members (parents, siblings, spouse, children), and a short summary of the book.

Dear Reader – With the author, write a paragraph about any additional information about the interview, appreciation of the subject or story coach, or encouragement to new young authors. (Maximum 250 words)

Back Cover Summary – Summarize the story in a way that is appealing to young readers. (Maximum 250 words)



Story Coach Guidelines

Biography - Using your notes from the interview, write a two-page biography about the subject in chronological order. Use accurate dates. (About 1000 -1200 words)