

First Latvian History Competition - History around us -

“The History of My Family” 2001\2002

Report

It was the first time that Latvia took part in the competition. Our topic was “The history of my family.. The topic was chosen because it is rich of sources. The popularity of this topic in other participating countries of EUSTORY was the second reason for choosing it. Finally the third reason - the history of the family is very close to everyone and gives strong motivation to the participants.

The topic received strong resonance among teachers and pupils: 936 applications were sent in in October 2001, which was great for our small country. We had 250 entries altogether, but we consider that this difference in number was due to a lack of experience among students and a deficit of methodological seminars.

Region	Number of participants		Methodological seminar
	Participants	consultants	
Aizkraukle	8	5	(Sintija Araja – finalist, Inga Rudzite - finalist)
Aluksne	2	1	
Balvi	8	5	
Cesis	13	7	*
Daugavpils	23	15	* (Maija Baženova – 3 rd place, Anna Pimanova – finalist, Sandrs Dunska - finalist)
Dobele	5	3	(joined in Jelgava) (Lina Šulgina – finalist)
Gulbene	7	4	
Jelgava	11	5	* (Elina Mikelsons – 3 rd place, Monta Kruklite – finalist, Arita Ivzane – finalist)
Jekabpils	17	8	* (Krista Puida – 3 rd prize, Signe Vilcane - finalist)
Kraslava	1	1	
Kuldīga	2	2	
Liepāja	25	13	* (Katrīna Budovska – Laivīniece – 2 nd prize, Aiga Mackevica - finalist)
Limbaži	6	2	(joined in Rīga) (Agnese Ermane – finalist)
Ludza	6	3	(joined in Rezekne)
Madona	10	4	(joined in Jekabpils) (Evija Pakalnina – 2 nd prize,

			Martinš Markevics – finalist)
Ogre	9	3	
Preili	2	2	
Rezekne	7	4	* (Linda Treija – 2 nd prize)
Rīga, Jūrmala	43	14	* (Martinš Egle – 1 st prize, Una Bergmane – 1 st prize, Linda Jenca – finalist, Matiss Plate – finalist, Linda Martinsone – finalist, Baiba Silamikele – finalist, Ieva Kaziniece – finalist, Kristaps Skujinš - finalist)
Saldus	8	4	
Talsi	24	2	* (Sabine Veidule – 3 rd prize)
Tukums	3	2	
Valka	11	8	
Valmiera	6	2	
Ventspils	7	3	

We believe that the topic of next year will be as successful as the first one. But we should continue the methodological work.

We had 250 entries.

	Participants	
	boys	girls
Grade 5 – 7 (age 11 – 14)	35	69
Grade 8 – 9 (age 14 – 16)	21	76
Grade 10 – 12 (age 16 – 19)	9	54
Total	65	199

The same attention was paid to both: the topic and the methods in students research works. Students mainly did proper research and they also focused on the topic. The most often used method was the interview. The most often chosen topic was the genealogy of the family, the second most popular one was the description of the life or an aspect of the life of one family member.

We came to the conclusion that students can work with different sources according to their age.

We did face some problems though:

- the conclusions of students are very wide and inappropriate concerning the outline of goals and the aims of the paper;
- the conclusions are too general;
- students have some difficulties in selecting the most important sources;
- sometimes students try to include too many materials in their papers, but it reduces the quality.

There are several reasons for these problems. At first, it is an untraditional way of learning for our pupils till 16 ages. They have not yet acquired skills for research

work. Secondly, there is requirement for research works in our curriculum for students from 16 to 19. Sometime it is the initiative of schools.

The teachers have the same problem: the lack of experience and skills in leading students research works. We could name some of our highlights:

1. great interest from students, consultants and society;
2. museums and archives are interested in our competition; some archives are open to students now;
3. the participation of our State President Vaira Vike – Freiberga in our Award ceremony and her affirmation to be the patroness of our competition in the next years.

The main outcome of the competition:

- the development of research skills of students;
- the investigation of the local history (many participants told us about the consolidation of their families);
- the deeper understanding of global history;
- the conclusions of student papers show us the integration process of our society;
- the independent conclusions are forming active citizens;
- history teachers of Latvia have the possibility to use high quality methodological literature, which is written and given to us by the Körber foundation;
- the cooperation with the War museum where the exhibition of students papers took place (it was visited by about 1000 visitors).

We think something could be done better next time. We plan to find additional financing and cooperate with sponsors.

This year we had only some sponsors: the Körber foundation, The History Teachers Association of Latvia, The School – Boards in the regions, some secondary schools, The Foundation of the journal “History of Latvia” at the University of Latvia, and the Latvian War museum.

We have a wide network of volunteers in the regions. We want to consolidate the activity of our students, which could be achieved by workshops for teachers, where the methodological literature prepared by us and the Körber foundation could be used. We tried to get academic professors involved in our competition, who will be able to prepare materials necessary for further methodological work in our competition. We will work with media.

We are looking forward to further cooperation.

Dace Saleniece
competition co-ordinator