



5.3 Easy to Read Stories – Story 1, Version 1

Roma Oral History Story 1: Alexandru Silaghi

Features of a biography

- About a real person
- Includes an introduction
- Chronological order
Give facts about a person's life
- Written in the 3rd person
- Written in paragraphs
- Use of sub-heading to organise information
- Use illustrations or images

This is _____.



Alexandru Silaghi ©RSG

Alexandru was born in _____.



Alexandru was born in Romania

Relationships

How are the people in the photographs related?

Alexandru

baby

father

brother

family

children

Emil



Alexandru with his brother

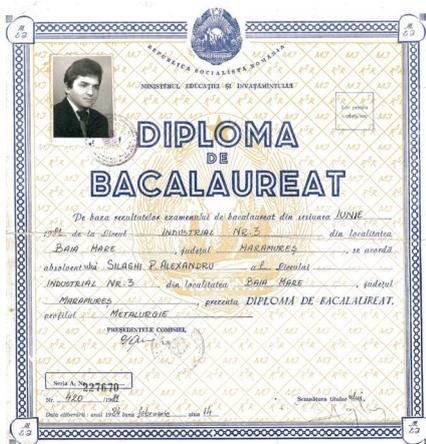
Emil (left) and a deer taxidermy (dead stuffed deer) ©RSG.

This is _____ and his _____

Alexandru went to _____



A Romanian school classroom



and got a _____ in _____

Alexandru's Diploma of Metallurgy, 1984 ©RSG



5.3 Easy to Read Stories – Story 2 , Version 1

Roma Oral History Story 2: Elzbieta Glowacka

Features of a biography

- About a real person
- Includes an introduction
- Chronological order
 - Give facts about a person’s life
- Written in the 3rd person
- Written in paragraphs
- Use of sub-heading to organise information
- Use illustrations or images

This is _____



Elzbieta Glowacka ©RSG

Elzbieta was born in _____

Life in Poland was _____

because _____



Elzbieta was born in Poland

Relationships

How are all the people in the photographs related?

Elzbieta
mother
father
daughter
son
family
children
husband
wife



Elzbieta and her husband on their wedding day ©RSG

This is _____ and her _____



Elzbieta's sons, her deceased son (left) and other son (right) ©RSG



Elzbieta's daughter Klarysa's Holy Communion day ©RSG

Elzbieta had two _____ and a _____

They are Elzbieta's _____



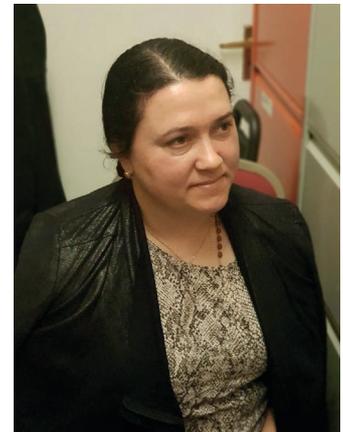
5.3 Easy to Read Stories – Story 3, Version 1

Roma Oral History Story 3: Rozalia Glowacka

Features of a biography

- About a real person
- Includes an introduction
- Chronological order
 - Give facts about a person's life
- Written in the 3rd person
- Written in paragraphs
- Use of sub-heading to organise information
- Use illustrations or images

This is _____



Rozalia Glowacka ©RSG

Rozalia was born in _____

Life in Poland was _____

because _____



Rozalia was born in Poland

Relationships

How are all the people in the photographs related?

Rozalia
mother
baby
father
daughters
son
grandchild
family
children



Rozalia and her family in the Polish Catholic Church in London ©RSG

This is _____ and her _____

This is Rozalia and her _____

and her two _____

They are Rozalia's _____



Rozalia with her three children ©RSG



5.3 Easy to Read Stories – Story 1, Version 2

Roma Oral History Story 1: Alexandru Silaghi

Features of a biography

- About a real person
- Include an introduction
- Give facts about a person’s life
- Chronological order
- Write in the 3rd person
- Write in paragraphs
- Use sub-headings to organise information
- Use illustrations or images

Alexandru Silaghi

Life in Romania

Alexandru was born in Romania.



Alexandru Silaghi ©RSG

Alexandru comes from a large brick-making family, they used to make bricks from April to October as it was seasonal work. His family travelled by caravan. Unfortunately they suffered discrimination and marginalisation because of their ethnicity. Alexandru went to secondary school to study metallurgy (metals) and later he began working in a laboratory extracting gold.



Brick making



Caravan & horse
©Robert Czibi



A Romanian school
classroom



Diploma Metallurgy,
1984 ©RSG

In 1989 when Communism ended, Alexandru was sacked from his job in the laboratory along with other Roma people, who were the first people to lose their jobs. After this, Alexandru began a jeans trading business between Turkey and Romania and opened a grocery shop in Romania. In 1994 he sold the businesses and at the age of 37 he left Romania.

Second World War

Alexandru's grandfather, Francisc Brandusan, a name he made up for himself to conceal his Roma identity, was a survivor of the Second World War. During the War, Francisc was sent to a labour camp in Transnistria where he was forced to work in freezing temperatures (-35 to 40 degree Celsius), without proper clothing, food and shelter. After three years in the camp, Francisc managed to escape and walked about 75 km to a city in Moldova, where he climbed into a train that was going to Romania. However, as he saw some guards forcing a lot of people off the train, he hid behind a large Moldovan woman's skirt and managed to escape.



Detention camp with Gypsies in Poland, 1942 ©Robert Dawson Collection, RSG



Gypsy women workers under supervision of soldiers ©Robert Dawson Collection, RSG



Gypsies awaiting deportation ©Robert Dawson Collection, RSG



Alexandru & Moldovan Gypsy woman ©Robert Czibi

Coming the UK

When Alexandru was 37 years old, he left Romania and went first to Hungary and then to Italy for work. Then in 2011, when he was 51, he arrived in the UK. At first he found it very difficult to settle and had to stay with his nephews. Afterwards he obtained the right to work in the UK and began working on construction sites.

Now, Alexandru feels like an equal, he is proud he has a job and good health and feels he has integrated into UK society, despite not speaking much English. Alexandru would like to create a Roma centre where Roma culture is celebrated and valued.



Romanipen

Alexandru considers Romanipen an unwritten law, where the spoken word acts as Roma law. Romanipen is also about family, respect towards the elders, who uphold Roma traditions through language, customs, clothes and important events such as births, marriage and funerals. A Roma person who does not follow these expected rules could be excluded from the community.



Roma family campfire ©RSG

Glossary Activity

What do these words mean?

Metallurgy

Labour camp

Discrimination

Marginalisation

Ethnicity

Traditions

Equal



A Romanian school classroom



Gypsy women workers under supervision of soldiers ©Robert Dawson Collection, RSG



Roma family campfire ©RSG

Roma Oral History Story 2: Elzbieta Glowacka

Features of a biography

- About a real person
- Include an introduction
- Give facts about a person's life
- Chronological order
- Write in the 3rd person
- Write in paragraphs
- Use sub-headings to organise information
- Use illustrations or images

Life in Poland

Elzbieta was born in a forest near Nidzic, in Poland, in 1949. Her Roma name is Jaruska. She had six brothers and two sisters.

As a child Elzbieta travelled with her family and relatives in a horse-drawn caravan. They lived in forests from spring to summer and rented a room in a village in winter. From the age of eight Elzbieta looked after her disabled father and she had no time to play with other children or go to school.

Elzbieta's mother cooked food in a big aluminium pot on a 'graifusy' (a metal stand with legs) over a fire. They ate meat stews, potatoes, dumplings, pancakes, crumpets, mushrooms, cheese, eggs and fish. Boys were in charge of picking mushrooms and fishing, and the women and girls picked blueberries to make into jam.



Elzbieta Glowacka ©RSG





Plants and herbs ©Robert Czibi

At night, half of the family slept in the caravan, and the other half in a tarpaulin tent. Inside the caravan, they had water glasses, white pillows with frills and silky featherbeds.

When she was 17 Elzbieta married one of her childhood friends has had nine children, four sons and five daughters. Tragically one son died in a swimming pool accident.



Elzbieta and her husband on their wedding day ©RSG



Elzbieta's sons, her deceased son (left) and other son (right) ©RSG



Elzbieta's daughter Klarysa's Holy Communion day ©RSG

Second World War

Elzbieta remembers her grandmother telling her about her 5 sons who were captured and lined up for execution but a German officer allowed them to escape. Elzbieta's disabled father and his brothers were also captured for selling meat and managed to escape.

When the World War Two began, Elzbieta's mother had 3 sons. One day, one of her sons cried inconsolably because he was so hungry for bread. To stop him crying, she went to a woman who was baking bread and exchanged one of her gold earrings for a loaf of bread but the woman only gave her half a loaf. Then Elzbieta's mother exchanged her second earring for a bowl of milk.

Coming to the UK

In 2013 Elzbieta's son Kaziu, who was living in the UK, went to Poland and bought his mother and sister to the UK to join the rest of the family living in Stratford, London. Elzbieta was 64 and they didn't want her to be in Poland on her own.

At the age of 69 Elzbieta now lives in a ground floor flat because she cannot climb the stairs anymore. Elzbieta likes being in the UK because she thinks people are friendly and feels that life is easier here although she doesn't speak English very well.

Romanipen

Romanipen is a set of rules that Roma ought to follow, such as respecting one another, being honest, behaving honourably, getting married before living together. Elzbieta feels that Romanipen is in Roma people's soul, they are born with it, and they either choose to follow it or not.

Glossary Activity

What do these words mean?

Horse-drawn caravan

Aluminium

Dumplings

Tarpaulin

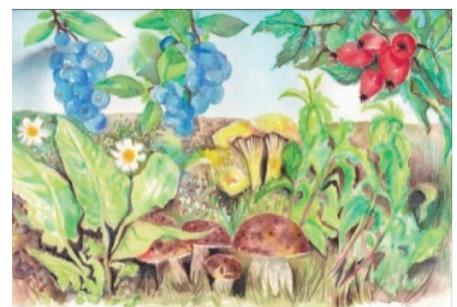
Romanipen

Featherbeds

Discrimination



Detention camp with Gypsies in Poland, 1942 ©Robert Dawson Collection, RSG



Plants and herbs ©Robert Czibi

Roma Oral History Story 3: Rozalia Glowacka

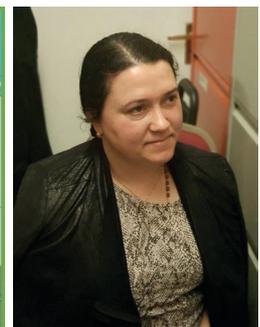
Features of a biography

- About a real person
- Include an introduction
- Give facts about a person's life
- Chronological order
- Write in the 3rd person
- Write in paragraphs
- Use sub-headings to organise information
- Use illustrations or images

Rozalia Glowacka

Life in Poland

Rozalia was born in Poland. Her Roma name is Chryzantema.



Rozalia Glowacka ©RSG

When Rozalia was ten years old, she started school with her brothers and sisters. Unfortunately however, she and her siblings suffered a lot of racism and one year later she moved school because her mother was worried about her safety. After leaving school, Rozalia tried to learn at home by herself and was sometimes helped by friends or neighbours. Life was very difficult as her family were very poor and there was often not enough to eat. They also experienced a lot of prejudice and were made to feel unwelcome by many people. As Rozalia said “I had to guard my brothers and sisters because other children would hit them and call them names”. Growing up, Rozalia loved to listen to music being played and to songs about Roma life and culture.



Siblings



Bullying



Gypsy fiddler ©Robert Dawson Collection, RSG

Second World War

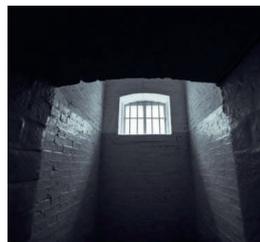
She also loved listening to stories. Her grandmother was a great storyteller with lots of stories to tell. She would tell told her stories about life during World War Two and how she saved her nephews from a concentration camp. They were taken prisoner by the Germans. Rozalia's grandmother had a plan to save them. She was a dancer who could speak fluent German. She pretended to be a German dancer and went to where they were holding her family prisoner and began to sing for them.



Woman with child
©RSG



Storytelling



Prison



Roma dancers ©RSG

Coming to the UK

Rozalia and her family decided to leave Poland in 1999 to go to the UK. Her son was three years old and she wanted a better future for him. In particular, she wanted him to attend school and to be educated. She and her husband arrived on the 30th of August seeking Asylum but could not speak any English. The first day they arrived in the UK, they had to wait all day in the airport. Finally an interpreter came along and they were taken to a hotel with lots of other people.



After that they spent the next few years being rehoused in different parts of London. Finally, after many years of searching, they were moved to a house in Newham (Manor Park). Now, Rozalia is very content with her life in the UK. Rozalia has attended many English classes and is now much more able to understand and speak the language. She is a very religious person and regularly attends church service in a Polish Catholic Church in Goodmayes. She gets there by bus. Rozalia is very proud of her Roma heritage and so are her children who have lived in the UK since they were young and have completely settled in their new school. She has grandchildren too and she is very proud of them. "I know that my grandson will have a better life when he grows up."



Rozalia in church
©Robert Czibi

Romanipen

Romanipen is about being Roma, Roma laws and belonging to the Roma community.

Roma language (Romanes) is Romanipen. In Rozalia's family, speaking Romanes is an important way to remember their Roma identity, as they don't want their language to be forgotten. Despite speaking Romanes at home, the children also like to speak English among themselves.



Rozalia & her three children ©RSG

Traditional Roma songs are about Roma culture, people's lives, good fortune, respect, music and dancing. Traditionally some Roma sang and danced to earn money and make a living. Rozalia's family used to sing and dance as a way of earning money.

Glossary Activity

What do these words mean?

Storytelling

Concentration camp

Discrimination

Romanipen

Prejudice

Heritage

Romanes



Detention camp with Gypsies in Poland, 1942

©Robert Dawson Collection, RSG



Storytelling



Roma dancers ©RSG