centropa

Student video competition
September 2017 – April 2018

Jewish Holidays
Project guideline

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General Overview: The Centropa Jewish Network competition

For the third year, the Centropa Jewish Network (CJN) announces a cross-cultural video competition for students. This is an opportunity for students to discover and share their experiences of Jewish life and culture in their countries. Students in Jewish schools in the US, Europe and Israel are invited to compete in any of the four categories, and by sharing their own projects, connect and learn from each other.

The best videos of the competition will receive valuable prices. For each category, we reward the first place video with a 400 EUR gift card, the runners-up with a 150 EUR gift card, while honorable mentions and the Audience prize winners will receive cinema tickets.

Project Goals:
- Connect students from the US, Israel and various countries of Europe, so they can learn about their own Jewish community, and from each other.
- To develop students' skills in the areas of research, presentation, cooperation/teamwork, ICT (info communication technology) systems, narrative writing and video editing. This project brings together many subjects: History, Computer Studies, Jewish Studies, Media Studies, and last but not least English Language.
- Produce high quality videos or presentations which are historically accurate, creative, and tell us an interesting story about some aspect of Jewish life or culture in the students' community.

Requirements:
All material submitted to the competition must meet the following criteria. Please note that the videos not meeting these criteria will not be accepted.
- The project must be a visual presentation of a topic: a video, PowerPoint, or Prezi.
- Students have to create the videos on their own. They might get professional support, but the final film has to be their own work solely. Students can work individually or in groups, where every student is responsible for a different task according to their interests and skills.
- The final product should not be longer than 5 minutes.
- All videos or presentations must have English narration or English subtitles.
- To submit your videos, upload them to Youtube, and then to the Centropa Border Jumping page. Upload the video until the deadline, which is the 27th of April, 2018.

The Jewish Holidays Project

From Rosh Hasanah to Pesach, from Hanuka to Purim, the Jewish calendar is full of holidays. There is a reason to love them all: great traditions, delicious food, songs, family and friends gathering together… Of course, each holiday has its own history, and is celebrated differently from family to family, from community to community.

If you choose this project, you choose one or more Jewish holidays, and create a film about it – about its history, traditions, and how it is celebrated in your family/community.

Step-by-step instructions: how to plan, organize and create the film

1. First, look at good examples!

As a first step, we recommend you to watch several of Centropa's short multimedia films to learn what a good, short film looks like. If you have time in class, here is an assignment about analyzing a Centropa film, which can help you think about how to design your own project. We also recommend you to look at the winning videos of last years' student competition. You can watch the winners here, the runner ups here.

After watching the films and answering the questions, hopefully you will have ideas about what a good film looks like, and how you would like to plan your own. So let's start!

2. Find your topic

As a starting point, think about Jewish holidays. Which one is your favorite, which one do you have stories about? Once you have chosen the holiday (or holidays), research its origin. Your film will be much more powerful if you can show how historical events shaped the evolution of a particular holiday and its meaning over time. You can also decide to tell a story about how a holiday was celebrated in your family, and how it is celebrated now. For this, you might want to talk with your family members, and ask if they have photographs of any celebrations.

Sources: Using the Internet to search for historical facts is not a problem as long as you *make sure your sources provide accurate information and are reputable*. You must follow your school's guidelines for citing those sources. Examples of acceptable sources: Yad Vashem, the US Holocaust Museum, the Virtual Jewish Library – but there are many other respectable sources in each country and language.

For historical dates and numbers, especially regarding the Holocaust, you need *two sources for every fact*. **Students and teachers in other countries will see your films so be sure to give them accurate information.**

3. Collecting the material for the film

A) Photographs and documents

Family Photos

When you interview your relative(s) be sure to gather and scan photos important to them, particularly any which will help you tell their story. If you're telling the story of your grandmother, ask for photos from when she was a child, teen, and adult. Use the photographs in the interview: Who is in the photograph? Where was it taken? What was happening just before or after the photograph was taken? Are there any memories that the photograph evokes for them? Choose photos that visually tell the story you will narrate. If your grandmother loved to hike and she has a photo of her on a hike you would include that.

If you scan a photo with several people on it, be sure to write down the names of the people in the photograph on a sheet of paper so that you remember. Usually, when people share a photograph they say, "this is, and that is." If you are recording the interview this will not help you remember. In addition, by writing by writing the information on a separate sheet of paper you can ask for the correct spelling, and later on remember who each person is in the photograph. For example, "Tibor Kertesz is on the left, Roszi Kenesei is in the back, on the left, Miksa Nemeth is standing in the back, middle." Otherwise, you will likely forget all of the names and who is who, which might be useful when writing the script for your film.

Websites

You will also need photos that convey the historical context for your film. You can search particular sites – such as Yad Vashem or the United States Holocaust Museum, to find these images. If you search Google and type in the name of a town + Jewish, you may get lots of photos. High resolution photos, at least 1084 x 824, will look best on video. Be sure to properly cite the source of every photo.

Libraries, museums or archives

Local museums or archives will have photos specific to your town's history. They will be a great resource for you to find photos or historical information to add to your film. Scanning the photos in their collections may cost money. We recommend you call first to find out what is available – it's possible they have some materials on their website.

Another option is to take a photo with your camera of a photo sitting on a desk. However, it is important to make a good quality photo. Take your picture in high resolution!

When using a photograph or document, always check for copyright permission!

B) Interviews

The best films tell stories learned from the very people who lived them, so you might want to interview several people who can tell your family stories. If you want to get the most out of the interview, you need to be prepared and we suggest the following:

Think about what you really want to know from the people you interview and write up a list of questions that will help you get that information. We recommend starting a week or two ahead of time to think about these questions because some questions might not occur to you until you've starting really thinking about what you want to learn from your interviewees.

C) Shooting photo and video

For this project, you need to take photographs and video recordings as well. For the recordings, try to use a good quality digital camera. [Here you can find a video with some very useful tips about how to make a good video – even with a phone.](#)

Whether you are recording the film with a camera or only an audio recorder, you need to make sure that the light is good and the sound is clear. If using a camera, the space must have excellent light. We also recommend you to use a tripod.

Sound: this is the most important part of any recording (believe it or not), and a little tricky because if you are not careful a bad microphone will not pick up the narration very well and a good mic will pick up every sound you make. We advise you to use a sound recorder, as the microphone on the camera usually won't be good enough. Smart phones usually have a good sound recorder. Place it close to whoever is talking, but make sure it is not visible for the camera.

When shooting video, here are a few basic rules:
- If the thing or person you are shooting is moving, then hold the video camera and shoot it.
- If the person is sitting, or standing in one place, use a tripod!
- If you want to show us a building, for example, then slowly pan the camera up or down. Each shot should last a minimum of 20 seconds.

4. Creating a storyboard, writing the script for the film

Now that you've gathered your story, information about the holiday in the world and in your family, photos, and video, you need to create a storyboard or script - in English. What is a storyboard? It is the story you will tell – in words *and* in images. Next to each sentence you place the images that will be on screen when you read that part of the script.

In order for your film to be interesting you have to do more than just tell us the facts. You have to make the viewer care about what you are telling them – so think carefully about why this particular holiday is important. People respond mostly to hearing meaningful things, not merely facts, so if you can make the holiday come to life by explaining its meaning your film will be more engaging.

When working on the script there are two options:
a) writing the script and making the video in English
b) making the video in your mother tongue and creating English subtitles.

Important: when you finish your script, be sure to show it to your teacher to check for grammar and storytelling. Your teacher will be able to show you where you should add more information, or perhaps another photo. Your teacher can also check your historical facts.

5. Instructions how to edit, cut, save, and upload the film

Since every school and student has different equipment, there are two options for making your film:

a) For those who don't have the time or equipment to make a full-fledged film we recommend that you put together a PowerPoint (PPT) or Prezi (www.prezi.com) presentation and record it with Screencast-o-matic (www.screencast-o-matic.com), which will allow you to capture your computer screen as you run the PPT slideshow or Prezi and add narration. If you haven't used Prezi before, we recommend you to visit their webpage and watch their short tutorials. Prezi is easy to use, and it is great for the visual representation of various topics, especially because of its zooming function that allows you to "zoom in" to the most important things in your film.

b) Those who have the time and resources to create a video that you will edit together, this can be done in many programs now - Microsoft Movie Maker, Sony Vegas, Apple iMovie, etc. If your school has an IT department or a teacher that specializes in video or film, then please have them help, too. You can find some help on the Centropa website as well.

As some basic tips, consider the following steps, regardless of your choice of software:

1. Collecting
    a) Collect your materials and place them into a single folder in your computer:
        a. Images
        b. Video Clips
        c. Audio Files
        d. Sound Effects (If you use background music, make sure to use non-copyrighted material so that you can upload your video to YouTube.)
2. Importing
    a) Open your software and make sure you have access to "import" the materials you collected into your software.
    b) Import all materials so that you can arrange them into an organized film.

3. Arrangement
    a) Your software will have a "timeline" or "project area" where you can arrange your materials to create your film.
    b) Consider performing your narration first, at the speed and tone you wish, and then add the materials.
    c) Once narration if complete, add your images, audio files, video clips and sound effects.

Remember to save frequently during this process!

At the end of the film, list all the names of the students who participated, thank anyone you interviewed, whoever helped you find information, and whoever worked with you to put together your project. Don't forget to cite every source in your credits!

4. Converting
    a) Finalize your film into a .MOV or a .MP4
    b) Save the finalized version to your computer

5. Sharing
   a) Share the saved file online on Youtube
   b) Ask your teacher to upload your film to our Border Jumping website so that students around the world can watch and comment on your film.
   c) After uploading your film to our Border Jumping page, write to the coordinator and let him know that you submitted the video!
   d) **Submit your video to our competition until 27th of April, 2018!**

Got more questions?
Do not hesitate to ask us at Centropa (Borbála Pál: pal@centropa.org or Sami Levi,
Jewish Holidays category coordinator (samilevi@uoml.k12.tr)