

## **CENTROPA LESSON PLAN**

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### **Course Title**

Holocaust

### **Unit/Lesson Title**

Rescued Memories

### **Abstract/Summary**

In this project, pairs of students create visual displays to use in a school-wide exhibition on Yom HaShoah. Using the Centropa database, each pair of students first chooses a country and then, within that country, chooses two individuals to research. Students are asked to compare and contrast the experiences of these people before, during, and after the Holocaust.

Each visual display (display board, power point, or website) is to include the following information about the two individuals:

- Biographical information;
- Historical context about their Jewish community prior to the Holocaust;
- Circumstances in which they found themselves during the years 1938-1945;
- What happened to them after the Holocaust.

In addition, students are required to use Centropa photographs, maps that show the movement of the individuals through the years, and a timeline of significant events in their lives.

### **Target Audience**

10<sup>th</sup> grade. (If more than one 10<sup>th</sup> grade class participates, teachers can divide up countries among their classes to avoid repetition in the exhibition.)

### **Number & Length of Unit/Session(s)**

Students had four research days in class and one full month to develop the visual product. Some of the time was spent in class, but most of the time they worked on the project at home. Each class session was 55 minutes.

### **Supplies Required**

Computers for access to Centropa's interview database

### **Centropa Films/Materials Used**

Centropa's interview database "Jewish Witness to a European Century." There was minimal use of films. Some students did watch films that were made from the interviews they read.

### **Content-Related Objectives**

The goal is to expose students to the story of the Holocaust from the perspective of different individuals, different countries, and different sets of circumstances.

### **Skills-Related Objectives**

To develop the following skills:

- Using interviews as primary sources for research;
- Documenting interviews, photos, and online resources in a bibliography and a visual presentation;
- Comparing and contrasting data;
- Exploring the role of memory in understanding the Holocaust.

### **Lesson Details**

See Student Information Sheet and Reflection Paper Instructions (below) for details.

### **Means of Assessment/Evidence of Student Learning**

Each student writes a Reflection Paper at the end of the project, exploring two questions:

- 1) What is the value of the biographical narrative in the study and understanding of the Holocaust?
- 2) What role should these personal stories play in commemorating the Holocaust for future generations?

### **Samples of Student Work**

None available

### **Links to Relevant Sites**

- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum <http://www.ushmm.org>
- Yad VaShem <http://www.yadvashem.org>
- Centropa's "Jewish Witness to a European Century" <http://www.centropa.org>

### **Teacher's Reflective Comments on Unit/Lesson**

There were three teachers who participated in the project. In discussion afterward we shared the following reactions:

1. We were very impressed with the visual products that the student pairs produced. They met our two goals:
  - a. Having an exhibition for the school on the day of Yom HaShoah that would attract the attention of younger students (grades 7-9) who have not yet studied the Holocaust and would give them a learning experience on the day of remembrance;
  - b. Exposing students to the story of the Holocaust through the eyes of individuals from different countries.
2. Some students found the project very difficult in two ways:

- a. Making a comparison of two individuals from the same country was too difficult a task in some cases. More time studying each of the individuals was needed (but given the large number of interviews used (45) this was not possible).
  - b. Students were often unable to find outside information about the relevant Jewish communities in the 1920s and 30s. As a result, they were forced to rely on the individual's testimony without supporting research.
3. The reflection paper was an excellent tool for raising the issue of memory vs. history. It allowed students to reflect on the value of memory in light of the increasingly small survivor population. It also highlighted the issue of the distortion of memory over time, especially after the trauma of the Holocaust.

“Rescued Memories”: A Project  
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**Student Information Sheet**

### **Overview**

The goal of this project is to expose students to the story of the Holocaust from the perspective of different individuals, different countries, and different sets of circumstances.

Students will work in pairs to research two survivors from the same community. **Each student will follow the life of one individual.** Through a display that will be shown to the entire school on Yom HaShoah, each pair will present their assigned individuals in the context of the community from which they came.

The project will ultimately yield two final products:

**1. Visual product (partner assignment)**

Students will prepare a visual presentation of their community, as represented by the individuals. This may take one of three forms:

- a. Tri-fold display board
- b. PowerPoint presentation
- c. Website

**2. Analytical reflection (individual assignment)**

Students will write a 2-3 page paper reflecting on the questions below:

- How does the experience of the individual you researched compare to the experiences of the other individuals from the same community?
  - Is the individual’s experience similar to that of the majority of his or her community?
  - When the experiences differed, what created these differences?

### **The Process**

#### **Research and Exhibit**

You will have 3-4 research days in class. Homework will be minimal during this time period to leave time for students to work at home as needed on the project.

Each student will research one individual. You will share information about your individual with your partner, then create an exhibit (tri-fold poster, web site, power point) that tells the story of these two individuals who are from the same region. See below for questions you should answer when researching and compiling your data.

### **Resources**

You must use a minimum of **four** sources for your research.

Your main source will be: **Centropa: Jewish Witness to a European Century:**  
<http://www.centropa.org>

In addition, you will also be using:

- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum: <http://www.ushmm.org>
- Yad VaShem: <http://www.yadvashem.org>
- At least **two additional resources**.

### **The Project**

Your visual product should include the following information:

- Basic biographical information of the individuals you researched
  - when, where they were born
  - family information – parents’ names, occupations
  - level of religious observance
  - type of education
  - type of occupation
- Background about the community in which they lived before the Holocaust
  - What is the size of the Jewish community?
  - How integrated were the Jews into the broader, non-Jewish society?
  - Was there antisemitism there and how much? How do you know?
- Circumstances in which they found themselves during the Holocaust years
  - What kind of influence did the Nazis have on this town during the Holocaust? Did they pass laws? Did they use the town’s government or install a new one?
  - What happened to this individual; compare and contrast their story to that of the other individuals from the same place
  - If they found places of refuge (in other towns, countries, private homes, woods, in hiding), show the route on a map indicating why those places were available to them as places of refuge. Describe/illustrate their experience(s)
  - If they were forced into ghettos and/or camps show their route on a map and describe/illustrate their experience(s)
- If this individual is a survivor, what happened to him/her after the Holocaust?
  - Where did s/he go before returning to the community?
  - What was his/her experience like upon return?
  - What happened to his/her community after the Holocaust?
  - What percentage (or how many) of this community survived?
  - To what degree was this community rebuilt after the Holocaust?

### **Visuals**

- **Photostory and Timeline:**
  - photographs of the individual and their immediate family
  - a map of the town/city also showing its location in its country
  - route of deportation/exile the individual took from their town/city during the Holocaust; the route should end in the place the individual found him/herself at the end of the war
  - photographs of the town/city
  - illustrated timeline
- *Be sure to include captions/explanations as well as citations for all visuals*

- For citations: either use endnotes or paste a silhouette of the poster on the back and include citations there. (We will review how to do this as a class).
- You must cite all sources, both text and visuals

**Bibliography of all sources** – properly cited according to Chicago Style. This may be posted on the back or at the end of your project (if it is a PowerPoint or website).

**Grading:**

- 50 poster (Group Grade)
- 40 reflection (Individual Grade)
- 10 bibliography
- 10 points participation (average of self-reflection and partner grade)

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Reflection Paper  
40 points

The purpose of this paper is to explore the core questions of this project. After reviewing the work of your peers you will write a paper answering the following questions:

1. What is the value of biographical narrative in the study and understanding of the Holocaust? (Do they enhance your understanding of the Holocaust? If so, in what ways?)
2. What role should these personal stories play in commemorating the Holocaust for future generations?
3. How did your research and the presentations of your peers add to/change your thinking of the Holocaust?

In answering these questions, please bring in examples from your own project, your partner's, and two or three other projects you looked at.

Requirements:

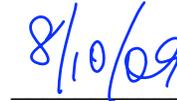
1. Two - three pages double-spaced
2. Your paper must include specific examples from your work, your partner's work, and at least three other projects
3. All examples must be properly cited (see citation format below)
  - a. Displays—author's last, first and first last. *Title*. Poster presented in 10<sup>th</sup> gr. Holocaust Honors, per. 6, CESJDS: Rockville, MD, spring 2008.
  - b. PPTs -- author's last, first and first last. *Title*. PowerPoint presented in 10<sup>th</sup> gr. Holocaust Honors, per. 6, CESJDS: Rockville, MD, spring 2008.
4. Your paper must be organized with an introduction, thesis statement, core arguments and supporting evidence and conclusion. Your thesis may be presented in one of two ways:
  - a. a thesis that ties both core questions together, or
  - b. two sections headed by a thesis in each section

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Signature

  
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Date