

Web Quest Subject: History

Web Quest Title: Developing a Digital Exhibition

Key competences: cultural awareness and expression; digital competence; social and civic competence; teamwork; collaboration; communication; critical thinking.

Key words: European history; online research; referencing; teamwork.

Introduction

When we look at the common history of Europe, we see that the continent, and its people, have been marked by many major events and influences that have helped to shape the continent today. Influences and events such as the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Revolutions from royalty to democracy; these have all helped to shape the continent that we all call home today. While our history is also marred by darker events – the Dark



Ages, the Two World Wars – it is important to appreciate the common history that we all share as European citizens so that we can understand the values that we all share as a result. As well as political upheavals, revolutions and wars, European history also includes many instances of socio-cultural changes that have not only influenced European cultures but through colonisation, have touched all corners of the Earth. To fully understand Europe, you need to appreciate its rich and often complex history. As Edmund Burke once warned us, “those who don’t know history, are destined to repeat it.”

Task:

You are interested in learning more about European history, however you have noticed that many people, including some of your peers, have very little appreciation and general knowledge about the history of Europe. You wonder why this is, and then you realise that your local museum does not have a dedicated exhibition for European history. You go to speak to the museum curator to find out if it is possible to include an exhibition about



a period of European history in their museum. She tells you that space and funding for new exhibitions is limited, but the museum is developing an online museum, where relevant

information can be accessed. After speaking with the curator, you agree to put together a digital exhibition of European history that could be hosted by the local museum. You already have an image in your mind of how you would like to digital exhibition to look, but how do you choose what to include in the exhibition? European history is so vast and rich with historical events and periods, how will you ever narrow it down? It is best to conduct some research online and find the period of European history that interests you most. The online museum will look to promote the cultural diversity of Europe, so try to settle on two or three events in history that show the diversity of culture and experiences that help to bind us all together as 'Europeans'. You may choose to present the Age of Exploration, when explorers from Europe discovered the 'New World', or The Renaissance and Enlightenment periods, or the Industrial Revolution or the Cold War – the possibilities are endless!

When you have settled on your exhibition and conducted your research online, you must put together a slides presentation of your exhibition, using PowerPoint or Google Slides, so that you can present your digital exhibition to the museum curator at the end of this task.

Note for Facilitator:

In beginning this Web Quest, we would recommend that learners work in groups of 3-4 to complete the research tasks, to develop their ideas and to present their exhibition at the end of the task. The reason why this group number is chosen is that it allows for creative brainstorming to settle on a period of history, and it also allows learners to share the responsibility and the workload. In this Web Quest, the facilitator will assume the role of the curator at the end. Each group will have their opportunity to present their digital exhibitions, and the facilitator can choose the winning team!

Process:

Step 1: Group Brainstorming!

The first step for you and your group is to think about European history and to brainstorm what you think are the most important periods of European history – try to think what about European history stands out for you and what might be of interest to your local community!

One of the most common techniques for coming up with new ideas is called brain-storming. It works best in a group, because everyone comes up with as many ideas as they can and then all ideas are shared around, which may spark a new idea in another group member. The activity involves setting a time limit of 10-15 minutes and, in that time, writing down every idea that comes into your head – the ideas can be silly, ridiculous and outlandish – it is most important in brainstorming that you don't censor your ideas, because you don't know what idea might work best when your group put your heads together. After 10-15 minutes, each group member shares their ideas. To read more about brainstorming techniques for group work, follow this link:

- <https://www.mindtools.com/brainstm.html>



Remember that the idea here is just to check what you already know about major events in European history. At the end of the 10-minute session, you should have a list of 10-15 events or period that your group has come up with. The next step is to pick 3-4 of these periods or events and then to conduct some research into each of them.

Step 2: Online Brainstorming

For this step, you will need access to IT equipment – laptop, smartphone or tablet, PC, etc. and an Internet connection. Here, working in your groups of 3-4 you should work together to discover all of the major periods in European history – to see if there is an interesting period or event that you have forgotten?

The following links will help you to discover the major periods of European history:

- <https://www.biographyonline.net/different-periods-in-history/>
- <https://www.thoughtco.com/major-events-european-history-4140370>
- <https://www.pouted.com/top-10-most-important-events-in-the-european-history/>
- <https://list25.com/25-most-important-events-in-history/>

You can also find other resources on platforms like Youtube:

- <https://youtu.be/gk4KUBt7720>
- <https://youtu.be/0zFe4bfIDFE>

When you have reviewed these links and others, and you should have selected an additional 3-4 events or periods from history to add to your list of important events.

Step 3: Online Research

As a group, you will work with the 6-8 major historical events or periods that you have identified so far, and you will conduct further research into these past events. The aim for this activity is that while you are conducting this research you will be trying to identify periods in history that you think people in your community would be most interested in learning about and that would be in line with promoting the cultural diversity of Europe – which your local museum wants to promote.



Working in your group, each group member should take 2 periods or events in history that are in your list and should conduct this online research using Google, Bing, Yahoo as search engines, and Google Scholar for academic publications on the topic. The aim is that by the end of this research, each group member will have chosen 1 of their 2 topics to be included in the digital exhibition, and the other should be disregarded.

Once the research is complete, your group should meet to discuss your final 3-4 choices for the digital exhibition. Each group member should be prepared to explain why those chose to include one event and to disregard the other.

Step 4: Timelining your Historical Events

Now that you and your group members have decided on the 3-4 topics or events that you would like to present in your digital exhibition, the next step is to create a timeline for these events. When presenting your digital exhibition online, you should ensure that material is present chronologically, starting with the event that is furthest back in time.

The following links can help you to create this timeline of the historical events and periods that you will present in your digital exhibition:

- <https://www.timetoast.com/timelines/important-events-in-europe>
- <https://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/eutimeln.htm>
- <https://schoolworkhelper.net/important-events-and-dates-in-modern-european-history/>

Step 5: Fact-checking and Producing Content

Once you and your team have plotted your historical events on a timeline, the next step is to start producing the content that you will present online. You may decide to use the timeline itself and to highlight specific dates, you may decide to design your digital exhibition like an old newspaper and to write short articles about specific dates, you may present your exhibition through audio or video files – the choice is yours!



Take some time now as a group to review the different ways that you could present your content online. This link might be useful for you:

- <https://velocitypartners.com/blog/infographics-14-ways-to-present-information-visually/>

When you have decided on the format, each group member should take one topic each and conduct further research. The aim of this activity is to check that all facts are correct and to ensure that only accurate information is included in each section of the exhibition.

Group members are free to work on their own to complete this task. Depending on how the content will be presented, for each historical event, group members should write 500-800 words and include some photographs from the time where possible. When writing the content for describing the event, try to begin with what the main causes or factors that contributed to

the event that took place, then briefly describe what occurred during the event, and then end by describing what the outcome or consequence of this event or period was.

Step 6: Referencing and Peer Reviewing

As the content you and your group produce will be presented through a museum website, it is important, not only that the information is accurate, but that it is also accurately referenced and sourced. Only information that is accurately sourced can be published on the museum's website. There are many different citation styles to present your references in. The following links provide some information on the different citation styles:



- <https://www.library.ucdavis.edu/guide/citation-styles/#mla-2>
- <https://www.ucd.ie/t4cms/Guide67.pdf>
- <http://libguides.ucd.ie/academicintegrity/mlastyle>
- <http://libguides.ucd.ie/academicintegrity/harvardstyle>

As a group, you should select one citation style and you should all agree to use this style when referencing the sources, you accessed to write your piece.

Once all group members have written their contributions to the exhibitions, your group should complete a short peer review exercise. For this, all you need to do is to swap your content with another group member and ask them to reach through it, identify any spelling and grammar mistakes, pinpoint any referencing issues, etc. It is common practice to have a peer review like this when articles or papers are published related to historical events.

When the peer review is finalised, and any changes are made, you and your team are now ready to prepare your presentation for the curator!

Step 7: Presenting your Digital Exhibition!

Now that you have completed all of the steps above, and your team has developed the content for your digital exhibition, it is time to make a presentation that you will give to the museum curator! As this is a professional presentation, use either PowerPoint or Google Slides to present your new idea, outlining the following points:

- What historical events or period you wish to present through the digital exhibition.
- What interested you about these events and why you chose them?
- What value you think that sharing information about these events will bring to your community?
- A brief synopsis of the research you have completed.

Learning outcomes

Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Factual knowledge about events in European history.- Theoretical knowledge of key events that have shaped modern Europe.- Basic knowledge of the causes and consequences of events in European history.- Basic knowledge about referencing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Apply teamwork skills to complete the project.- Use organisational skills to complete the project at hand.- Use research skills to look for information about European history.- Demonstrate presentation skills to present your conclusion about European history.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Awareness of the richness of European history.- Appreciation of how European history has helped to shape our modern society.

Conclusion

We live in the present, we are preoccupied with our future and often neglect to stop and appreciate our past. Our common history in Europe is what has given us the society that we live in today. We are always influenced and conditioned by our common history, which is why it is important to understand European history in order to appreciate how Europe functions today. Knowing not only the history itself but also the history of other



civilizations, cultures and societies contributes to our growth as people. It also has other benefits; it helps us to understand people and society, it also helps us to understand the world in which we currently live.

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