YOM KIPPUR AT METZ: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES

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| Short description of lesson | In this activity students are asked to analyse, interpret, and evaluate various works of art depicting Yom Kippur at the Battle of Metz to determine which is the best representation of the historical event. In addition, they will explore the emerging themes such as nationalism, separatism, and integration and the relevance of these themes to their own lives. |
| Age group | Junior High, High School, informal education |
| Length of activity | 2 classes – at least 1.5 hours |
| Primary sources from the NLI collections | * [Yom Kippur at the Siege of Metz, 1870](http://primo.nli.org.il/primo_library/libweb/action/dlDisplay.do?vid=NLI_CJA&docId=NNL03_CJA700398534) <insert link to resource on website>
* [Kol Nidre in Metz, 1870](http://primo.nli.org.il/primo_library/libweb/action/dlDisplay.do?vid=NNL_Ephemera&docId=NNL_Ephemera700347553)
* [Yom Kippur on the Battlefield, 1870](http://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLI/Hebrew/digitallibrary/pages/viewer.aspx?docid=NNL03_EDUSP3896&presentorid=NLI_EDU&searchurl=http://web.nli.org.il/sites/nlis/he/education/pages/results.aspx%23undefinedquery%3Dany,contains,%D7%97%D7%99%D7%A0%D7%95%D7%9A%26query%3Dlsr14,exact,%D7%99%D7%95%D7%9D+%D7%9B%D7%99%D7%A4%D7%95%D7%A8%26institution%3DNNL%26vid%3DNLI_EDU%26loc%3Dlocal,scope:(NNL_EDU1)%26sortField%3Dpopularity%26indx%3D1%26bulkSize%3D10)
* [Israelite Worship On The Battlefield](http://primo.nli.org.il/primo_library/libweb/action/dlDisplay.do?vid=NNL_Ephemera&docId=NNL_Ephemera700347323)
* [Yom Kippur](http://primo.nli.org.il/primo_library/libweb/action/dlDisplay.do?vid=NNL_Ephemera&docId=NNL_Ephemera700348973)
* [Jom Kipur (Versohnungstag) vor der Schlacht bei Metz 1870](http://primo.nli.org.il/primo_library/libweb/action/dlDisplay.do?vid=NNL_Ephemera&docId=NNL_Ephemera700344822)
* [Yom Kippur 1870 at Metz, Occasional Poem](http://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLI/Hebrew/digitallibrary/pages/viewer.aspx?presentorid=NNL_Ephemera&DocID=NNL_Ephemera700318634)
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| Background information | * Jews in the Military, Jews Worshipping Amid Din of Battle in War-Torn Europe, *The Museum of Family History,* http://www.museumoffamilyhistory.com/eej-worshipping-war.htm
* Siege of Metz (1870), Wikipedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege\_of\_Metz\_(1870)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Metz_%281870%29)
* Franco Prussian War, New World Encyclopedia <http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Franco-Prussian_War>
* [*Jewish Icons: Art and Society in Modern Europe*, Richard I. Cohen, (University of California Press, 1998, pp.169–171](https://books.google.co.il/books?id=pZAp3SWO-TYC&lpg=PA169&ots=eA0m7DwbV5&dq=metz%20yom%20kippur&hl=iw&pg=PA171#v=onepage&q=metz%20yom%20kippur&f=false))
* “[How to Read a Primary Source,” *University of Iowa*](https://clas.uiowa.edu/history/teaching-and-writing-center/guides/source-identification/primary-source)
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| Material, equipment, and preparations | * Computers, tablets, smartphones
* Analysis worksheet printouts
* (Optional) [PDF](file:///E%3A%5CGesher%20Europe%5Cwebsite%5Cdevelopment%20process%5Cresource%20packs%5CTishrei%20-%20Chagim%5CYom%20Kippur%5CYom%20Kippur%20at%20Metz%20pictures.pdf) printout (best in colour)
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| Documents | * [PDF with pictures](file:///%5C%5Cnlifs%5Cdatabank%5Ceducation%5CGesher%20Europe%5Cwebsite%5Cdevelopment%20process%5Cresource%20packs%5CTishrei%20-%20Chagim%5CYom%20Kippur%5CYom%20Kippur%20at%20Metz%20pictures.pdf) – printout
* [Primary Source Analysis Worksheet printout](http://processing.nli.org.il/sites/ManofEng/PriteyHinuch/ManofDocuments/%D7%93%D7%A3%D7%A2%D7%91%D7%95%D7%93%D7%94_Primary_Source_Analysis_Worksheet.pdf)
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| Introduction (5 minutes) | **Discussion Questions*** What is a primary source?
* What makes a primary source historically accurate or credible?
* Can we learn history from primary sources?
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| Group activity | **Resource Analysis*** Divide students into an even number of groups.
* Distribute one of the images to each group of students.
* Each group tries to understand the resource by completing the Primary Source Analysis worksheet.
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| Class discussion | Hold a short discussion about the images from the group activity.At this point, do not go into detail about the historical credibility of the event – the questions are just intended to make sure that the students understand the subject of the artwork. * What historical event do you think is depicted in these images?
* Who are the soldiers depicted in the images?
* What are they doing?
* How did you deduce this?

If relevant and time allows, discuss the wider context of the Franco-Prussian War. |
| Group activity | **Comparing Resources**At this stage, students will look at the differences and similarities between the different resources which all depict the same event but in a different way. Pair two groups together. Each group presents their resource and together they list the similarities and differences in a table.

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| **Similarities between the two images** | **Differences between the two images** |
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Direct the students to the pay attention to the following features: * Characters
* Numbers
* Actions
* Objects
* Background
* Texts
* Message
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| Class discussion | This activity asks the students to critically inspect historical materials. Summarise the group work, concluding that the different depictions of the event indicate that the images are not historically accurate. Ask the students to suggest why this might be the case. *These artworks were changed to reflect the feelings of German Jewry, who were at the time fiercely patriotic. Many of the pictures were actually exaggerated versions of the real life historical event.* Ask the students:* Why would the artists have produced work like this?
* What messages were they trying to convey?

*Because of anti-Semitic claims that Jews were not loyal citizens, German Jews were constantly trying to prove how loyal and devoted they were to German society. This was the first war in which German Jews were allowed to participate. Artists exaggerated the number of German-Jewish soldiers participating in this event probably to enhance this idea.* *In addition, the depiction of non-Jewish German soldiers protecting their Jewish comrades at prayer strengthened Jewish pride in being integrated members of society while also adhering to their tradition. The verse from the Book of Malachi written on the handkerchief stresses the idea that Jews considered themselves full members of society: “Have we not all one Father? Did not one God create us?”* Ask the students:* What was the status of German Jews before and after this battle?
* How did it change over the years?
* These images reflect both religious and national values. Have Jews always been able to balance these two values?Have they always wanted to?Do conflicts exist between religion and nationality and between integration and preserving one’s culture and tradition?
* Have you ever been in a situation in which different parts of your identity clashed?How did that make you feel?What did you do?

*By the end of this activity, students should come to the understanding that not all historical materials necessarily reflect historical truths but can be biased or exaggerated versions of history.* Ask the students:* Were you previously aware of how cautious historians must be not to assume that all evidence is factual?
* Has this activity changed your view of history?
* What should you do to ensure that the historical materials you encounter are authentic?
* Is history objective? Can it be?
* How can we guarantee that history remains objective?
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| Creative activity | Create a “choose your own ending” story in which the main character faces a conflict between two parts of his or her identity. This can also be also done digitally (using Google Slides – see [this tutorial](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wzck174sRtk) as an example). |