OKLAHOMA NATIVE AMERICAN YOUTH LANGUAGE FAIR

Helpful Hints

Not sure where to begin for your performance or project? Here are a few ideas that might help. Remember that the Fair is all about Native language use, so simply talking or writing is the most important part.

If you're still not sure about where to begin, or have questions about any of the following, please contact ONAYLF staff at **onaylf.samnoblemuseum@ou.edu** or 405-325-7588.

Category Crossovers

Some of the Fair categories occasionally seem very similar to other categories. ONAYLF staff will help you make sure your students are registered in the right category, but keep these distinctions in mind when selecting a category for your performance or project.

- Traditional and Modern song: Hymns and anthems should be registered under the Traditional category. Translations of contemporary music, original songs, and others should be registered in the Modern category.
- Spoken Language and Spoken Prayer: The spoken language category is the overarching category general performances. Spoken prayer is reserved for more solemn oratory, such as prayers and traditional speeches.
- Spoken categories and Song categories: Spoken language entries may be accompanied by background music, but if the performance relies heavily on song, it should be registered under the appropriate song category.
- Comics & Cartoons and Books: You should indicate which category your entry is intended for on the Material Submission form. Comics tend to include panels and a focus on character dialogue. Books must be bound in some way and tend to include an emphasis on narration. Comic books are judged with the Book category.
- Books: Some of our participants use the PowerPoint® program to design and create their book entries. This is acceptable but ONAYLF will not print your book for you. The book must be submitted in printed bound form.
- Live performances and material submissions: Live performances require student presence at the Sam Noble Museum on the Fair days. Consequently, we do not accept filmed presentations in live categories. Filmed presentations with be judged with Film & Video or Mobile Video depending upon the length of the presentation.

Ideas for Performances

Tell a traditional story, when and if appropriate to your Tribe. You can tell other kinds of stories, such as humorous narratives or personal narratives about something that happened to you or someone in your family. Act out in a skit either traditional or new stories. Video your group performing a puppet show of traditional or new stories for an electronic Puppet Show performance. Show how to do something or explain how it is done in your family or community. Tell the history of something in culture, such as basket-making or a part of your Tribe's history.

Song – Traditional and Modern

If you are adapting a tune from and English song, do not try to directly translate. This never works. You can keep the general idea of the song but use the way your own language expresses it. You can make up your own, new meaning and words entirely. We accept all types of songs, hymns, anthems, lullabies, and more.

- Make a vocabulary list ahead of time. Go over the words once before you introduce the song.
- Make the song interactive whenever possible. Adding actions enhances language acquisition and memory.
- Use "karaoke" when learning longer or more complicated songs. When students sing along with a recording, it helps them get in all the words, pronounce them correctly and feel comfortable singing.
- Pattern songs, such as "Old McDonald" or "There was an Old Lady who Swallowed a Fly" are good for introducing new vocabulary. Have students create their own new verse.

Poetry – Spoken

Poetry allows student to use their language to express themselves, even when they may not have much or perfect grammar. Poetry gets students to use whatever language they have. Poems do not have to conform to any traditional poetic style or structure. We accept all types of poems on any topic. Informational websites can help get your students started learn about types of poems and strategies for writing. Poems can be original or translations of existing works.

Books

Students may write and illustrate a traditional story if appropriate to do so, or they may create new stories of their own. Tell a story about something that happened to you, a parent or a grandparent when they were young. Show how something is done or made in your community. Some suggested types of books:

- Pattern books repeat a certain sentence form and are great for teaching sentence structures.
- Silly sentence or tongue twister books often have funny pictures – think Dr. Seuss. How does your language have fun with sounds, words, and sentences?
- Create pop-up books to give a 3-D effect to your story.
- Alphabet books are fun to make and for sharing with friends and other children. Be sure to have complete sentences with the word that illustrates the sound.
- Poetry: A book of your collected poetry.
- Translations of published books must be accompanied by permission from the copyright holder.

Cartoons & Comics

Entries must be illustrated in some form, but illustrations can be done by hand or by computer. Several comic and cartoon generators are available online. Many fonts are available to download online for indigenous writing systems. If you cannot find a font for your language but want to use a computer to illustrate your comic, print out your illustrations and then write the language by hand.

Comics and Cartoons can be about any topic. They can be single panel (like satirical cartoons), three-panel (like in the daily newspaper), or longer than a page (like graphic novels). Comic books will be judged in the Book category. You can tell jokes, tell stories, or comment about a topic of your choosing in comics.

Film & Video

Films are the fastest growing media for capturing and expressing Native language and Native themes. Here are only a few ideas for your film:

- Document an elder, a social event, or how to do something.
- Create an original story line and act it out. This can be dramatic, humorous, sci-fi, or any other genre.
- Create a documentary about a historical or current event or issue.

There are many resources and examples of Native film and video online. Check out the following YouTube channels for ideas:

- Weyiiletpu's Channel (Phil Cash Cash) has an excellent assortment of films in and about Native languages created by indigenous people around the world.
- The Living Tongues Institute and National Geographic's Enduring Voices Project has a channel that contains documentary clips in indigenous languages.
- Oklahoma's own 1491's provides humorous shorts. Most are in English, but provide excellent examples of Native made short films.
- The ONAYLF YouTube channel for last year's winning films and videos.

Mobile Video

Mobile videos are a great media for capturing short videos expressing an idea in Native language. Here are a few ideas for your mobile video:

- Explain what a tribal idiom means.
- Create an original short story and act it out.
- Video yourself or a group singing or reciting in Native language.

The ONAYLF YouTube channel for last year's mobile video submissions.

Still have questions, please contact the ONAYLF office at 405.325.7588 to ask!