**Topic: "**Cogito ergo sum" – the truth in our life.

**School subjects:** History / Philosophy / Form period

**Students’ age:** 6 - 12

**Methods:** brainstorming, work under the teacher’s direction, work in groups, multimedia presentation, visualization

**Didactic aids:**

multimedia presentation / sheets of paper and felt-tip pens / pens

**The aims of the lesson:**

The participants of the project:

* get familiar with the figures of Descartes and Aristotle
* explain the terms: scepticism, illusion, mirage
* explain the apophthegm “*cogito ergo sum*”
* charakterize the concept of truth
* recognize the relevance of Descartes’ thoughts
* learn to look for the ways of a better understanding of truth and to practice philosophical reflection in everyday life
* shape critical approach to morality and moral sensitivity
* notice how important it is to be guided in life by the value of truth

**Instructions:**

**1.**The students and the guests sit in a circle together with the leading teacher. To start with intellectual warm-up, the teacher suggests playing association game and gives “the truth” as the password.

The student who sits to the right of the teacher says a word that he associates with the word “truth”. The next participant must come up with their own association to the previous word. The game continues until the queue reaches the teacher again.

**2**. The teacher summarizes the intellectual game, pays attention to how different the paths of human thoughts can be. Then, the teacher divides the participants of the class into groups. He orders each group to develop its own definition of the concept of truth. Foreign language teachers help the students to translate definitions.

The groups of the students, referring to their own knowledge and Internet resources, create their own definitions of truth. They present them to others either in their native language or in English.

**3.** The teacher gives a short lecture and shows the presentation to inform the students about the way in which Aristotle perceived truth. Next, the teacher explains the assumptions of the classical concept of truth. Aristotle relied on senses and logical thinking. In his *Metaphysics*, Aristotle stated: "To say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true".

The students listen to the teacher and watch a slide about Aristotle. The slide presents information about what the truth is according to Aristotle both in their native language and English.

**4.** The teacher explains that many scientists in subsequent epochs questioned the view of Aristotle. Is that right? The teacher presents various forms of optical illusions.

The students listen to the teacher and comment on the presentation (it contains examples of geometrical and optical illusions, figures impossible to exist, information about the artists who used illusions in their works (Salvador Dali, Julian Beever, Rob Gonsalves).

**5.** The teacher introduces the figure of Descartes - a philosopher who wanted to know something "for sure", wanted to know the truth. He stated that everything could be denied apart from one thing. The teacher asks the students to try to answer the question “ What do you think exists beyond any doubt?”. The teacher displays a slide about Descartes.

The students give examples of what seems certain and clear to them. Depending on how much time is left till the end of the lesson, they use visualization - everyone writes some suggestions on a self-adhesive card. Then, the students’ suggestions are placed on a shape of a human head prepared previously. The teachers from partner schools can also get involved in the task.

**6.** The teacher emphasizes the fact that according to Descartes, the thinking process is something that exists definitely. You can think in a wrong way, but you can be one hundred percent certain that you keep thinking at any moment, and therefore you exists. Hence the famous saying: "I think therefore I am". The teacher, following Descartes' thought, gives the first example by sticking a sentence "Cogito ergo sum". Then, the teacher adds the next example: "Mathematics is real" (because its results can be checked). The next sentence is "God exists" (Descartes thinks about God and he thinks that God is perfect. If there is such a concept in the brain, then it means that it must come from somewhere – it comes from someone more perfect than Descartes' brain itself) and the world exists because since God exists and since He created Descartes and his brain, then it means that God is good. And since He's good, He doesn't lie to Descartes. In that case, the whole world is real.

For Descartes, the purpose of life was to find truth in life. Is truth important to people nowadays? What does the rejection of truth and living in a lie lead to?

The students, using the method of brainstorming, refer to the teacher's questions which are displayed on the slide both in their native language and in English.

**7.** The teacher summarizes the statements of the students. He appeals to John Paul II, who often emphasized in his sermons that truth sets free. A world built on lies, false information, and assessments is a world where people such as Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin led millions of people to death in concentration camps. The theory of the Nazis, fascists or communists based on lies led to terrible suffering all over the world.

The students look at a photo of the child survivors of the Auschwitz concentration camp.