

National History Day Documentaries

What is a Documentary?

A History Day documentary reflects your ability to use audiovisual equipment to communicate your topic's significance. Through a documentary you will be able to incorporate still images, moving images, narration, and other types of media into a 10-minute original production.



The Basic Framework

- **Time Limit:** Documentaries may not exceed 10 minutes in length. Timing will begin when the first visual image of the presentation appears and/or the first sound is heard. Color bars and other visual leads in a video will be counted in the time limit. Timing will end when the last visual image or sound of the presentation concludes (this includes credits).
- **Student Produced:** A History Day documentary must be produced only by the student or students who are listed as the creators of the entry. This means that only the students can work with the technology to create the documentary, record or film interviews, etc.
- **Credits:** You must also include credits at the end of the documentary and these credits will count towards the time limit.
- **Self Run:** A History Day documentary must also be self-run, which means that there is no live narration or commentary during the documentary. You should be able to hit "play" and walk away.
- **Be sure to check the NHD Contest Rulebook for complete category rules!**

Why Should I Choose the Documentary Category?



A documentary can be an excellent way to communicate the research and analysis of your topic. You need to, however, make a careful decision in selecting the documentary category.

- **You need to be a good fit for the category.** You should be interested in working with computers and documentary technology. You should have access to a computer with documentary or computer-based slideshow software (such as PowerPoint or Keynote) either at home or at school. Do you know how to use this software or are you willing to learn? You should also think about where you will have to do most of the work on your documentary. If you are working in a group, how will you arrange transportation to group members' homes?
- **Your topic needs to be a good fit for the category.** You also need to think about if your topic will lend itself well to the documentary category. A great deal of visual materials are required to fill ten minutes in a documentary. What photographs, illustrations, film footage, etc. will you be able to find about your topic?

Types of History Day Documentaries

There are two basic types for documentaries that will satisfy the requirements for a History Day documentary.

- **Video-Edited Documentaries:** Most History Day students use video-editing software to create a 10-minute documentary, much like professional documentary that you might see on PBS or the History Channel. Video editing programs often come standard on computers (Apple's iMovie or Windows' MovieMaker) but there are also many other choices for software. The advantage this approach offers is that you are able to more easily combine visual and audio elements in your presentation.
- **Computer-Based Slideshow Documentaries:** Although the popularity of this type of documentary has waned as new technology has been developed, a computer-based slideshow (such as a PowerPoint presentation) is still an acceptable way to create an NHD documentary. Students creating this type of documentary may be tempted to display their script as written text on slides, however, this is not the most effective form of presentation as viewers will want to hear the narration, not read it. Students can include audio narration through PowerPoint or synchronize an audio recording to be played simultaneously with the slideshow.

Documentary Organization

Similar to any other History Day project, your documentary should **make an argument** about your topic. In order to make a clear argument, you need to have a good organizational structure to your documentary.

- **Opening/Introduction:** As the documentary begins and you introduce the subject to your viewers, make sure that you are also making your argument clear. You want to let your viewers know what you will prove with your documentary.
- **Body:** Make your documentary more than just one fact after another. Dividing your documentary into sections that will help support and prove the argument you have laid out in the opening. Sections will make it easier for you to create your documentary and easier for your viewers to follow along.
- **Closing/Conclusion:** While squeezing everything you want to say into just 10 minutes can be difficult, it's important to make time at the end of your documentary to reiterate your conclusions and argument for your viewer.
- **Credits:** Remember that one of the History Day rules is that you include credits at the end of your documentary.

What should I include in my credits?

According to National History Day, "your credits include every source that appears in your documentary, but not every source you consulted." This means that you don't need to include your entire bibliography in the credits, but it should include a list of the general places you went for information, including: people who worked on the documentary, interviewees who appeared in the documentary, archives or institutions used to find information, music credits, filming locations, and any special thanks you would like to include. If you need a sample, check out a professional documentary to see what they include and how they format their credits.

Documentary Elements

- **Script:** The script is one of the most important elements in your documentary. The script contains your thesis, support for your argument, and demonstrates your research. You should put a significant amount of time into writing a solid script. Your script can include quotes from your research that help to support your argument. You can incorporate the words of those you may have interviewed for your research. In the end, you will record your script to create the narration for your documentary.
- **Visual Images:** The visual images are critical in a good documentary as they provide the visual support for your script. It's important to build a large image collection as you are doing your research, instead of waiting until you are putting the documentary together. You can find images online for your documentary, but you can also building your image collection by scanning or taking digital images of photographs in books. Take care to make sure that you images are at a high enough resolution to not appear pixelated on screen.
- **Music or Sound Effects:** An effective soundtrack can make for a moving and effective presentation. What music or effects would enhance your documentary? Make sure that the music is not too loud or the effects too abrupt to distract from your narration, which is the most important part of your documentary.

Equipment and Technology

Creating a documentary requires access to software and/or video editing and production equipment. This doesn't mean having to purchase pricey software programs! Apple's iMovie and Windows' MovieMaker are standard applications on the newest versions of each operating system. Talk with your parents and teacher about what resources are available at home or school and where you will plan to do the majority of your work. (This is especially important if you do not use the same program at home and school or have different programs at group members' homes.)

If you are planning on shooting your own footage or interviews, you may also need access to a video camera or recording equipment. Again, talk to your parents or teachers about what you can borrow from school, friends, or family. If equipment isn't available at your school, remember to check and see what might be available at other schools in your district.

Frequently Asked Documentary Questions

Who can operate the camera or recording equipment to create the documentary?

All entries must be student-produced, which means that group members (or the individual student) must operate all equipment. If you are creating a documentary as an individual and want to appear on camera, you will need to set the camera up on a tripod and film yourself in the scene.

Who can appear in the documentary?

Since entries must be student-produced, this means that group members (or the individual student) must be the only ones that appear on camera as a narrator or in any dramatization that you may film. Please note that this does not include interviews that you do of participants in a historical event or experts.

Can someone else read quotes or narrate the documentary for me?

No, only group members (or the individual student) may provide the narration and voice-over for the documentary. Students can use pre-existing narration or sound clips, but cannot have something created by others specifically for use in your entry.

Putting the Documentary Together

Organization and planning are important keys to success in the documentary category. Once you've completed your research, outline the main points of your argument and the sections you will need in your documentary, much like if you were writing a paper. From there, you will be able to write a script and develop a storyboard of images to include in your documentary. It is important to plan all of this out on paper before you even begin working with the computer program!

The **Video Storyboard** form on the following page offers you a simple template to plan out your documentary. Once you have your script written, you will want to select visuals to help explain, demonstrate, and support your argument. You may also want to keep track of the duration of each video clip or narration segment.



Documentary Storyboard

Notes/Time	Visual	Audio

Tips for Creating a Spectacular NHD Documentary

Watch other Documentaries

One of the best ways to understand the qualities of a good documentary is to watch other documentaries, both professional and those produced for NHD. What are the effective features of the documentary? How do they convey their argument? Are there any techniques you think you should avoid? You can find many old NHD documentaries by looking on NHD.org or searching on YouTube.



Develop Your Argument

No matter if you are working alone or in a group or in the junior or senior division, it is important to make sure that your argument (thesis) is clear **in the project** itself. Your argument should be your analysis of why your topic is significant in history. It is what transforms your documentary from just a story to an argument. It is the lens that brings everything else in your documentary into focus.



Plan It Out

Using your thesis as a guide, outline your argument and write your script. You can then use a storyboard to plan out what visuals you can use to support your narration. Planning this all out on paper before you even begin using the program will save you frustration later on.

Use Your Research

Your research is there for more than just embellishing your bibliography. Figure out ways to include your research as support in your documentary. Are there quotes that you can include in your script? Newspapers or photographs that you can use for visuals? Not only will this help to prove your argument but it will also make your documentary more interesting to your viewers.

Content is More Important than Glitz

Fancy transitions, graphics and effects can make for a flashy documentary and can be fun to create, but remember that the history is the most important part of your documentary.



The Documentary Stands Alone

When evaluating NHD documentaries, judges should be able to find all the information about your topic in the documentary itself. The documentary has to stand on its own. This means that your argument, support and theme connection need to be apparent within the documentary and not depend on your explanation in the interview. Ask someone who has never seen your documentary to watch it (a friend, teacher, neighbor, etc). Without saying anything, have them watch the documentary and then ask them a few questions to see if you have communicated your argument clearly: What am I trying to prove in my documentary? What evidence have I shown to support that argument? What do you like about my documentary? What is confusing to you?

Fair Use and Copyright

Making History: How to Create a Historical Documentary, a booklet produced by National History Day, offers a good summary of this issue for History Day students. "Because you are creating an *educational* documentary for the NHD competition and are following NHD's contest rules, your entry should fall within "fair use" copyright laws. But this means that"

- Your documentary can only be shown within NHD competitions.
- You must have proper *credits* within the film.
- You must list and credit *all* of your sources in your annotated bibliography.
- You cannot take and use verbatim the narration of another [professionally produced] documentary.

If you have questions regarding copyright issues, you should contact the NHD office or an attorney directly. In preparing your entry for NHD, you, your teacher, and your parents or guardians should be mindful of copyright issues. A helpful source to consult with respect to these issues is The Copyright Kids webpage, operated by The Copyright Society of the U.S.A. This page can be found at <http://www.copyrightkids.org/>."

Preparing for Competition with a Documentary

Available Technology at the Event

When registering for a History Day event, pay close attention to the technology that will be available. The contest registration materials should specify what types of technology will be available for documentaries. All event facilities will have a DVD player, computer, and projection screen. Please make sure that your documentary will play on a DVD and Computer. If you have questions about the technology, be sure to contact your teacher or the contest coordinator. It is always advised to go to your room before judging begins and do a test-play.

Showing Your Documentary

Students will have an assigned time at which they will share their documentary with the judges. When you play your documentary, other students, teachers and visitors will likely be able to quietly watch your project. You must be able to operate all technology to play your documentary at a competition.

History Day documentary judging usually follows the order given below:

- **Process Paper and Bibliography:** Give the judges copies of your process paper and bibliography first so they can begin reading these right away.
- **Set-Up:** While judges are reading these documents, begin set-up of your documentary. Make sure that the documentary works on the equipment provided and test the volume.
- **Wait for the Signal:** Wait patiently for the judges to give the signal that they are ready for you to start.
- **Introduction:** Introduce yourselves and your documentary. Make sure to only state your name(s) and the title of your project. Any other commentary at this time is inappropriate.
- **Play:** Begin the documentary. You may also need to adjust the lights.
- **Take-Down:** When the documentary is over, remove your documentary (and any extra equipment you may have brought) so that the next student can begin set-up.
- **Interview:** Then walk closer to the judges for your interview.

Frequently Asked Questions about the Documentary Category at History Day Competitions

What happens if I go over time?

The judges won't stop your documentary if you go over time while presenting at a competition. They will, however, note that you exceeded the time limit on your comment sheets. Going over the time limit can also affect your ranking at a competition as a significant time overage gives you an unfair advantage over other students.

What happens if my documentary won't play?

Don't panic! We have all had technology problems and will work our hardest to make sure that you are able to play your documentary. If you are unable to get your documentary to play, talk to the judges and the contest coordinator. They may have access to additional equipment to play your documentary. If the documentary won't play during your assigned judging time, they will likely ask you to come back after the other documentaries are finished and try again. However, this can be avoided by testing your documentary before your competition time and having multiple formats of your documentary ready (DVD, YouTube, flashdrive, etc.)

What if there is a final round of competition?

Sometimes there are more documentaries in your category/division than one panel of judges can watch. When this happens, documentary judging is split into first and final rounds of competition. For example, say there are 14 junior individual documentaries at a competition. These documentaries will likely be divided into two groups of seven for the first round. First round judges will then pick their top entries to advance to a final round of competition.

In a final round, the documentaries are shown again to a new set of judges and this judge panel will select the top entries. These run-off finalists will be announced after first round judging is complete and you should check the contest program for the time and location. There are no interviews in the final round, so all you need to do is play your documentary. If you are unable to be present for the final round, you will likely be able to ask a friend or teacher to play the documentary for you. Make sure you have enough copies of your process paper for a final round!

What are the Qualities of a Good Documentary?

The qualities that a judge is looking for in your NHD documentary are written right on the evaluation sheet. Listed below are the same criteria judges will use to evaluate your project. After you create your documentary, go through this list and ask yourself if you've met the criteria or incorporated this information into your project.



Historical Quality – 60% (At 60%, the historical quality of your documentary is by far the most important part!)

- My documentary is historically accurate:** All the information in my documentary is true to the best of my knowledge.
- I show analysis and interpretation:** My documentary doesn't just recount facts or tell a story. I interpret and analyze my topic. My documentary has a strong central thesis or argument that I prove. I can point to where I state my thesis on my script.
- I place my topic in historical context:** My topic didn't take place in isolation. I made sure to place my topic into historical context – the intellectual, physical, social, and cultural setting for my topic.
- My project shows wide, balanced research and I used available primary sources:** These ideas all relate to the research behind your NHD documentary. Judges will look carefully at your bibliography to learn more about your research process. They want to see that you investigated multiple perspectives about your topic and to see that you looked at all sides of an issue. They are looking for research using both primary and secondary sources and to see that you used a variety of source types.



Relation to Theme – 20%

- I clearly relate my topic to the theme:** My theme connection is clear in my documentary itself.
- I demonstrate significance of my topic in history and draw conclusions:** My documentary does more than just describe my topic. I explain why my topic is important in history or demonstrate its significance.



Clarity of Presentation – 20%

- My documentary and written materials are original, clear, appropriate and organized:** I have an organized and well written documentary. I was careful to avoid plagiarism and I have double checked spelling and grammar in my process paper and bibliography.
- My documentary is organized, has visual impact and the documentary category is appropriate to my topic:** I thought about the overall organization to my documentary and was careful to make sure that this category was a good fit for my topic.



National History Day in Wisconsin
Wisconsin Historical Society

www.wisconsinhistory.org/teachers/historyday/
historyday@wisconsinhistory.org



National History Day Exhibits

What is an exhibit?

An exhibit is a visual representation of your research and interpretation of your topic's significance in history. Your exhibit will look a lot like a small version of an exhibit you might see in a museum. You may have already made something similar to an exhibit if you have ever created a poster for a class project.

Creating an exhibit gives you the opportunity to use a variety of visual materials to make your argument. In addition to text, you can use things like timelines, maps, graphs, charts, photographs, paintings, media devices, or artifacts. You can also incorporate primary sources into your exhibit – including quotations, letters, newspaper articles, and more. Using these visual elements will help you create a rich and informative exhibit.



The Basic Framework

- **Size Limit:** the overall size of your exhibit when displayed can be up to 40 inches wide, 30 inches deep and 6 feet high.
- **Word Limit:** There is a 500 word limit to all text that you create that appears on or as part of your exhibit. All the text that *you write* counts toward the 500 word limit. If you didn't write it, it doesn't count towards the limit. This means that you can use quotations from other sources and it won't count towards your limit.

Examples of things that count...	Examples of things that don't count...
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Titles and subtitles• Captions• Graphs, charts, or timelines that you create yourself• Text that you write that is on your exhibit, is included in a scrapbook, or narration in a media device	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quotations• Graphs, charts, or timelines that you don't create yourself• Brief citations crediting the source of an illustration or quotations

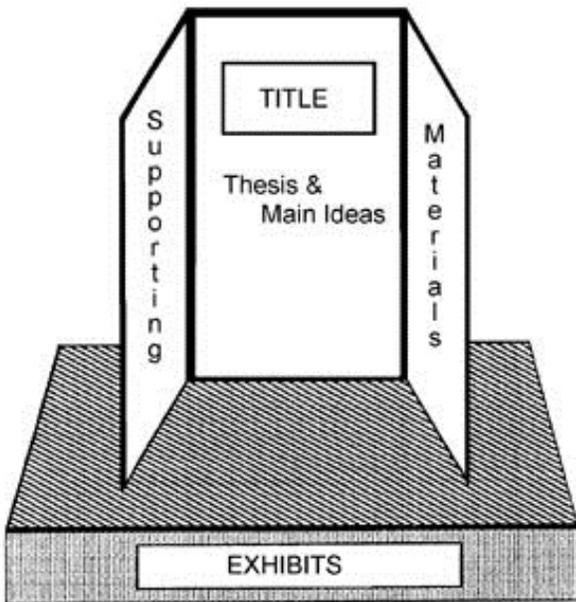
- Dates count as one word. For example, "December 2, 1935" would all count as one word.
- **Media:** Media devices (such as tape recorders, projectors, computers, tablets, or video monitors) can be used in your exhibit. They must not run for more than a total of 3 minutes and the viewer must be able to control the media device. Remember, media devices must fit inside the size limit, and if you write narration for your media clip it will count towards your 500 word-limit.
- **Be sure to check the *NHD Contest Rulebook* for complete category rules!**

Why Should I Choose the Exhibit Category?

The exhibit category is great for people who enjoy working with their hands and physically building an argument. If you've ever gone to a museum and wondered how they put an exhibit together and thought you might want to give it a try—now is your chance. You should make sure that you have access to exhibit building supplies, including exhibit or poster board, construction paper, a printer, scissors, adhesives, etc. While many topics can be effectively conveyed using the exhibit category, this category is especially suitable for topics that have a variety of visual materials that can be used to support the argument, including photographs, illustrations, maps, graphs, newspaper articles, letters, etc.

Exhibit Shapes and Sizes

Exhibits are designed to display visual and written information on a topic in an easy-to-understand and attractive manner. Exhibits are not simply collections of material. They are carefully designed to make an argument about your topic. To be successful, an exhibit must create an effective balance between visual interest and historical explanation.



Three-Panel Display

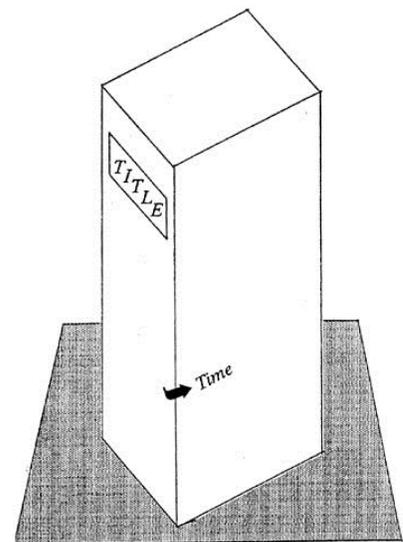
The most common form of an exhibit is a three-panel display, similar to the one on the left. This style is the least complicated to design and build, and is a very effective way to present your information. Here are some tips for this style:

- Be sure your title is the main focus of the center panel.
- Use the center panel to present your main ideas and argument.
- Use the side panels to provide supporting evidence for your argument.
- Divide the exhibit into sections to give it an organizational structure that makes sense to the viewer.
- If your topic is presented chronologically, make sure the sequence works visually on the panels.
- You have a limited number of words; use them sparingly and let the quotations, documents, artifacts, drawings, and photographs demonstrate your thesis.
- Artifacts or other materials may also be placed on the table between the side panels, but remember that it should be directly related to the topic and necessary to support your argument.

Three-Dimensional Exhibit

A three-dimensional exhibit is more complicated to construct, but can be especially effective for explaining topics where change over time is important. Like the three-panel display, one side should contain your title and main theme. As you move around the exhibit, the development of your topic can be explored. It is not necessary for the project itself to be able to spin. You may set it on a table (or the floor) so people can walk around it.

When making a three-dimensional exhibit, good organization is especially important. Because your exhibit has so many sides, viewers may be more easily confused about how to follow your exhibit's narrative. Make sure that each side is clearly labeled, cleanly organized, and that there is a logical flow of ideas as the viewer moves about your exhibit.



This is just a start to the creative ways that History Day students have expressed their arguments in the exhibit category. Think about ways to connect the content of your project with the look of your exhibit. The only limit is your imagination and ability to transport your project to a competition!

A Closer Look at History Day Exhibits

A good design doesn't just jazz up your exhibit; it helps express your ideas. Can you guess what this exhibit is about without even reading the text? The cut-out of Rosie the Riveter lets the viewer immediately know the project's topic. The student took the theme a step further by using a red, white, and blue color scheme to convey the patriotic aspects of her topic.



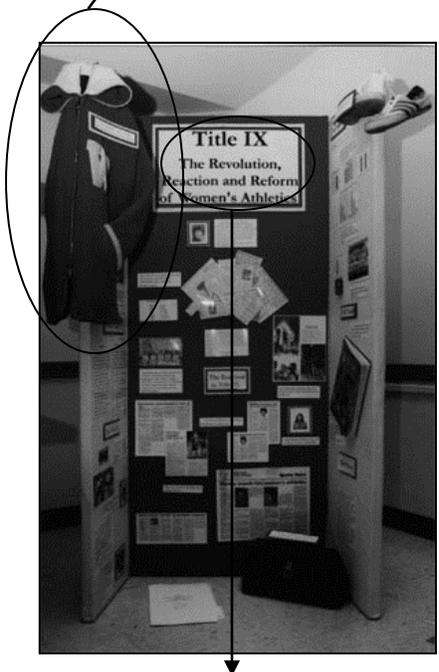
History Day exhibits come in all shapes and sizes, but there are several common characteristics you can see in many good exhibits. Check out these exhibits from other Wisconsin students!

The thesis and main argument are very clear to the viewer in this project. The student used a larger font and a bold border to immediately attract your attention

History Day isn't about glitz. The student has a simple, effective design for a project with a clear argument and solid research.

Photographs, newspapers, and sheet music are just a few of the primary sources that the student was able to incorporate into the project to prove her argument.

This exhibit incorporates a variety of interesting artifacts for the viewer to examine.



The theme for the year this project was created was "Revolution, Reaction, Reform." To show the topic's connection to the theme, the student used words from the theme in the title and section headings.



This project was about the journey that immigrants took through Ellis Island to their new lives in America. To connect the project to the topic, the students used an old suitcase as the frame for their exhibit. They made sure their argument stood out and divided up the space to give the exhibit an organizational structure in the same way they would have if they had used an exhibit board.

Tips for Creating a Spectacular NHD Exhibit

Planning



Getting Started

After you finish your research, make an outline for your exhibit, just as you would before you write a paper. Include the main arguments and points that you would like to make in the exhibit. Using this outline, you'll be able to see what the main sections of your exhibit need to be in order to support your argument and convey it to the viewer.

Plan It Out

Plan out your exhibit with a simple sketch before you start to create the full-scale project.

Connect Content to Design

Let the topic of your project inspire the design of your exhibit. What visual look can you give your exhibit that will connect the appearance of your project to your topic? This can be as simple as using appropriate colors. A project about women's suffrage, for example, would be striking using purple and gold, colors commonly associated with the movement. In the past, students have been able to connect the look of their project with the content on even larger scales. Students have created projects about conservation that look like trees, projects about education reform that look like school houses and exhibits about wars that have included dioramas of battle scenes.

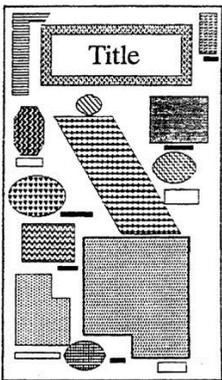
Divide and Conquer

Split your outline into different parts. Organizing your exhibit into logical sections will make it easier for you to assemble and easier for your viewer to understand what you are trying to say. What sections might you need in your exhibit? Background? Significance? Historical Context? Outcomes? Relation to Theme?

What's Your Point?

No matter what type of exhibit you decide to create, what topic you choose, or what division you are in, it is important to make sure that your argument (thesis) is clear **in the project itself**. Your argument should be the first thing the viewer looks at so they know right away what you will be proving in your exhibit. It should be concise and well-written. Usually students do this by making sure the argument is located where the viewers' eyes will look first, usually in the center in a larger font.

Putting It All Together

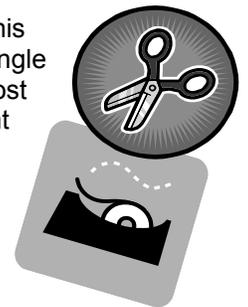


Avoid Clutter

It is always tempting to try to get as much on your exhibit panels as possible, but this usually makes for a cluttered and confusing display. You don't have to put every single photo, drawing, and map that you found onto your exhibit. Try to select only the most important items for your project boards. Clarity and organization are most important goals for this project. Everything should have a reason for being on your exhibit.

Content is More Important Than Glitz

Fancy exhibits are nice to look at and can be a lot of fun to create—but remember that your historical argument is the most important part of your exhibit.



A cluttered exhibit can leave your viewers feeling overwhelmed and unsure about the argument you are trying to make.

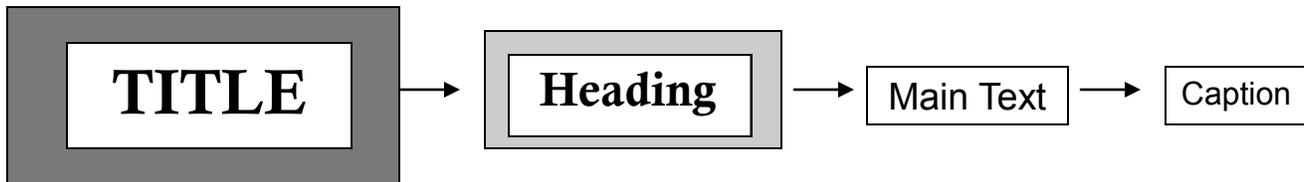
A Note on the Quote

Quotations can be an effective way of using historical evidence to support your argument. Sometimes, a quote from the historical figure just says it better than you could say it yourself.

Only original words (i.e. words written by you) count toward the word limit, so quotations do not take away from your 500 words. Quotations should not, however, be used just to “get around” the word limit. Using quotations this way and covering your exhibit with tons of quotes can easily make your exhibit cluttered and overwhelming for the viewer. The important aspects of your NHD project, your argument, analysis and interpretation, should stand out. It is important, therefore, to make sure that there is a reason for everything you put up on your exhibit and that it is well organized.

Labels

Once you’ve divided up your information into sections, you should make sure to label those sections. The labels you use for your title and main ideas are important because they direct the viewer’s eye around your project. Remember: **Big Idea=Big Font**. You will want to put your title in the largest font on your exhibit and then scale the rest of your fonts down according to their importance.



One way to make your labels stand out is to have the writing on a light colored piece of paper with a darker background or matting behind it. This can be done with construction paper, tag board, or mat board. Dark black lettering makes your labels easier to read. Photographs and written materials will also stand out more on backgrounds.

Captions & Credits

Captions can be very useful in showing how a particular illustration or item you’ve included in your exhibit helps prove your point. Which of the following captions do *you* think would work best with the political cartoon on the right about former Wisconsin Governor Robert La Follette? Why?



- A. Political Cartoon about Governor La Follette
- B. Governor La Follette’s supporters championed his reforms as beneficial for citizens of the state.

Credits are required for all images and quoted material. See the NHD Rulebook for details.

Keep it Neat

You’ve spent a lot of energy researching and creating your exhibit. Take the time to give it some extra polish. Make sure you’ve checked your spelling and grammar. Make sure you’ve cut and glued things to your exhibit board as neatly as possible.

Look It Over

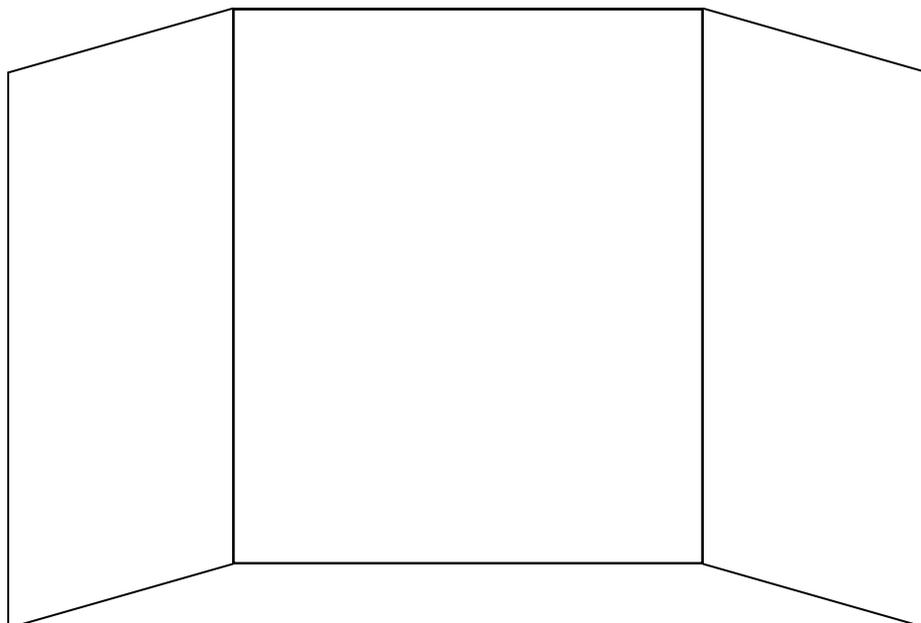


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History Day Exhibit Planning

Title:	
Thesis:	
Connection to Theme:	
Design and Color Ideas:	
Main ideas that support my thesis: <ul style="list-style-type: none">••••••	Main sections to organize my exhibit: <ul style="list-style-type: none">••••••
Possible illustrations to use:	



What are the qualities of a good exhibit?

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Relation to Theme – 20%

- I clearly relate my topic to the theme:** My theme connection is clear in my exhibit itself.
- I demonstrate the significance of my topic in history and draw conclusions:** My exhibit does more than just describe my topic. I explain why my topic is important in history or demonstrate its significance.



Clarity of Presentation – 20%

- My exhibit and written materials are original, clear, appropriate and organized:** I have an organized and well written project. I was careful to avoid plagiarism and I have double checked spelling and grammar in my exhibit, process paper and bibliography.
- My exhibit is organized, has visual impact, correctly uses maps, photos, etc:** I thought about the overall design and organization to my project. I chose my visual illustrations carefully to help prove my argument.

National History Day Historical Papers

What is a historical paper?

A paper is the traditional form of presenting historical research. A History Day paper is not simply a biography or a book report. It is a grammatically correct and well-written historical argument. Various types of creative writing (for example, fictional diaries, poems, etc.) are permitted, but must conform to all general and category rules.



The Basic Framework

- Must be completed as an individual. No group papers.
- No less than 1,500 words, no more than 2,500 words (about 6-10 pages).
- Contains citations to document work (footnotes, endnotes, or other internal documentation).
- **Be sure to check the *Contest Rulebook* for additional requirements and guidelines.**

Why Should I Choose the Paper Category?

Creating a History Day paper can be a rewarding experience and can be a successful way to communicate an argument about a topic. You will especially enjoy the paper category if you like to write and can express your ideas well through writing. The paper category is also great because you need very little visual evidence to support your argument, unlike a documentary. Since you cannot create a group paper for NHD, you also have to be willing to work alone.

It's important to remember that projects in the paper category must be completed and submitted in advance of History Day competitions, usually one to two weeks before the event takes place. This will give judges time to read your paper in advance of your interview. While it may be a challenge to complete the project before students in other categories, you will be far more relaxed than your fellow students the night before the competition.

History Day Paper Formatting

The National History Day Rulebook provides specific formatting guidelines for paper entries. Pay special attention to the following requirements:

- Papers must be typed, computer printed, or legibly handwritten in ink.
- Print papers on plain, white 8.5 x 11-inch paper with 1-inch margins on all sides.
- Pages must be numbered consecutively and double-spaced.
- Pages must be single-sided.
- Papers must be stapled in the top left corner and should not be enclosed in any cover or binder.
- The title page should list your title, name, and division/category only.
- No illustrations are permitted on the title page.
- It's best to use a font that is easy to read, such as Arial or Times New Roman, and an average-size font (10, 11, or 12 point).



It may look like quite a list of rules, but following these guidelines will help make sure your paper looks as polished and professional as possible!

NHD Paper Writing Process

Creating a paper for History Day is similar to other research papers you have written and generally falls into three basic steps:

1. Collection of Information

The process you will go through to collect information for a paper is the same as for all other History Day categories. The information you collect will form the basis for your entire paper. See the *NHD in Wisconsin Student Guide* for more information on **research** and **note taking**.

2. Organization of Information

The organization of information is especially important to create a successful historical paper. This begins with the **analysis** of your research and development of your **argument** or thesis statement. You can then begin to divide your research into different categories and draft an **outline**. Your outline is important as it is the roadmap for your entire project. Remember that each section in your outline (and in your final paper) should help support and prove your thesis.

3. Presentation of the topic in an interesting and convincing way

A historical research paper is more than just a story and is more interesting than just the presentation of one fact after another. To create a **structured argument**, each paragraph should have a topic sentence to focus the content of that paragraph. By following an outline that is connected to your thesis, you are going to build solid and convincing support for your argument. Additionally, what sorts of **supporting materials** can you incorporate into your paper? Are there quotes from historical actors that you can incorporate into your paper as evidence? Would a relevant map, photograph, or chart help your viewer to understand your argument? Finally, it is important to work through **multiple drafts** of your paper before you turn the final copy in to a competition or your teacher. Think critically about your paper and ask for feedback from others. Do you have a clear argument? Is your paper well-organized? Have you checked for spelling and grammatical errors?



NOTE: There are many books available on how to write research papers and you may find it helpful to look at one or more of them before you begin. Ask your history or English teacher to suggest some useful guides.

Frequently Asked Questions about the Paper Category

How do I count words in a historical paper?

Each word or number in the text of the paper counts as one word. The word limit does not apply to: notes, annotated bibliography, illustration captions, and supplemental/appendix material.

May I include an appendix in my paper?

Yes, but appendix material must be directly referenced in the text of the paper. Extensive supplemental materials are inappropriate. Use of appendices should be very limited and may include photographs, maps, charts and graphs.

May I include illustrations in my paper?

Yes, illustrations (such as photographs, maps, charts, and graphs) can be included in your paper. However, it's important that all supplemental material is directly tied to the content of your paper and that illustrations effectively help you to prove your argument. They should not just be used for decoration.

May I include other elements—such as an exhibit board or PowerPoint—with my paper?

No, in choosing the paper category you are limited to submitting only your written paper and supporting materials (annotated bibliography and optional appendix). No other elements are permitted.

Is creative writing permitted as a historical paper?

Yes, you can submit various forms of creative writing, such as fictional diaries or poems. Remember, however, that all paper entries must still conform to category rules. Most importantly, all papers must convey and support a historical argument. Look at the NHD criteria for a paper to see how you can combine a creative style of writing with historical research and analysis.

Annotated Bibliographies and Citations

The annotated bibliography and the citations in your paper work together to show your reader the research that you have done and to demonstrate how this research has influenced your argument. Understanding bibliographies and citations and successfully incorporating them into a research paper will be a skill that is necessary through middle school, high school, college, and beyond.

Annotated Bibliographies

The bibliography is a list of sources you have consulted in creating your paper. This listing of every source that contributed to your project will be stapled to the end of your paper. Each source will be annotated, which is a brief description of how that source was useful to your research. Keep a **working bibliography** to track the sources you have used throughout your research process. It will be very challenging, if not impossible, to try and remember this information once you have finished your project.

Refer to the NHD in Wisconsin Student Guide and a style manual for MLA or Turabian (the accepted NHD citation styles) for additional information on creating this document.

- Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*
- Joseph Gibaldi, *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*

Citations

Citations are used within the paper to show the origins of ideas or quotations presented in the paper. History Day students can use several different styles of citations – footnotes, endnotes or parenthetical citations – depending on the citation style they choose (MLA or Turabian).

What is a citation?

Your historical paper will be created using the evidence and ideas created by other researchers or historical actors. Citations are a writer's explanations that ideas or quotations presented in the paper are not their own. Citations not only give credit to the originators of the ideas, but also point out the historical evidence in support of your argument about the past.



NOTE: The failure to acknowledge the origin of an idea or a quote is the equivalent to using someone else's work and claiming it as your own. This is plagiarism and can have serious consequences!

Usually citations occur in three situations:

1. **Quoting a Primary Source:** An example of this would be including a selection from a speech or interview in your paper.
2. **Quoting a Secondary Source:** If you include a direct quotation in your paper from someone else (such as a book) you must cite it.
3. **Paraphrasing a Secondary Source:** Even if you change the author's ideas into your own words you must cite where you found this information when you include it in your paper.



NOTE: Footnotes and endnotes can also be used to provide further explanation for your paper. If there is an idea that requires additional explanation, but that explanation would interrupt the flow of your text, you can discuss it in a footnote. Please note, however, that extensive footnotes should not be used to get around the word limit.

What do I put in a citation?

Citations are brief and provide only enough information to guide the reader to the correct complete reference in the annotated bibliography.

- **Parenthetical citations** usually include the author's last name and page number.
- For the first time you reference a book in a **footnote or endnote**, you usually include the author's name, title, publishing information, date, and page. For each time you create a footnote or endnote for that source after that, your citation can be shorter, usually just the author's last name and page number.



NOTE: The requirements and formatting for parenthetical citations, footnotes or endnotes will vary depending on the style guide you are using (MLA or Turabian) and the type of source you are referencing (book, article, interview, etc.). **Be sure to refer to the appropriate guide for more information!**

Annotated Bibliographies and Citations

Where do I Place Citations?

You have several options for placement of citations depending on personal preference and the style manual you are using. You will select from one of the following:

Parenthetical Citations: Parenthetical citations are placed in parentheses at the end of the sentence where they are referenced.

Footnotes: For footnote citations, a superscript number is placed at the end of the sentence that refers to a citation at the bottom of the page. Most word processing programs can format footnotes automatically.

Endnotes: For endnote citations, a superscript number is placed at the end of the sentence that refers to a citation on a separate page at the end of the paper. Most word processing programs can format endnotes automatically.



NOTE: While placing citations in parentheses in the text is permissible according to the MLA style rules, many readers prefer footnotes since they do not interrupt the flow of the text. Most History Day students will use footnotes or endnotes.

National History Day is an academic enrichment program and each year more than half a million students participate in schools across the country. National History Day (NHD) is a great opportunity for students to become historians as they investigate a topic in which they are interested.

Historical research is important in helping students to develop skills that will help them achieve good scores on tests as well as develop habits they will need for the rest of their lives (Kasperek, Malone and Schock 2004, viii).

For students, the impact of the program goes far beyond school. According to Stephen Frese, 2006 NHD Grand Prize Winner, "It's true: History Day is not just a day. It is an experience that can change your life."¹

At this moment, students across the nation are creating documentaries, exhibits, papers, performances and web sites to share their ideas with others. The most popular presentations category is exhibits.² Many students creating projects in this category work hard on the visual impact of

1. National History Day, "2006 National History Day Annual Report," 15 July 2008, <<http://www.nhd.org/images/uploads/library/34726p1web.pdf>>.

This sample page should help you understand how parenthetical citations, footnotes, and endnotes look in a paper. Remember that you should not use all three methods at once. You will **pick one** method, according your style guide, and use only that for your citations.

This parenthetical citation tells you the page where the author found the information (page viii) and gives you just enough information to find the complete citation in the bibliography.

This small number refers readers to the footnote at the bottom of the page.

This small number refers to an endnote at the end of the paper.

Endnotes

1. -----
2. -----
3. -----
4. -----
5. -----

10 Tips for Creating a Spectacular NHD Paper



Find Your Voice

Using the right tone in your paper will make your paper as professional and polished as it can be. Your History Day paper is a type of formal writing, so use a formal voice and style for your paper. ***the way U rite sez alot 2 ur reader***. Don't use slang, informal abbreviations, jargon, or offensive language. Think about the mechanics and look of good writing: grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling and well formed paragraphs. Look at historical books or articles for models.

Focus on the Writing

In the paper category, your words are all you have to convey your argument and analysis to the judges. A well structured argument will go a long way to convey your ideas to the judges. You will likely have much more to say than you can include in just 2,500 words. You are going to have to think critically about what information is most relevant to your paper. Decide what evidence most effective in establishing your thesis. In doing this, you will likely create multiple drafts of your paper before you are ready for your first competition.



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Polish Your Work

Putting an extra polish on your work is especially important in the paper category. Since papers are read before the day of the competition, judges will likely look over your work multiple times. In addition to asking others to help you with proofreading, it's a good idea for you to proof your paper from a printed copy, not just on the computer screen where it is much easier to miss errors. In addition, try reading your paper aloud. Sometimes your eyes don't notice a mistake until your ears tell you that something isn't right.

Prepare in Advance

National History Day papers are submitted before the competition, usually with your registration materials. The version of the paper that you submit in advance is the final version that judges will use for the competition. Judges will already have read your paper by the time you come to the competition. This means that you will have to be finished with your final product about two weeks before the competition. Make sure that your timeline for completing a paper includes this variable.



The Interview is Important

Just because the judges have already read your paper doesn't mean that the interview is unimportant. The judges will use the interview to answer questions they had about your paper, analysis, research, etc. The interview is also your chance to clarify your argument and show off all your hard work for the judges.

The Paper Stands Alone

When evaluating NHD papers, judges should be able to find all the information about your topic in your paper itself. The paper has to stand on its own. Have someone who has never seen your paper look at it (a friend, teacher, neighbor, etc.). Without saying anything, let them read through the entire paper. Then, ask them a few questions to see if you have communicated your argument clearly: What am I trying to prove in my paper? What evidence have I shown to support that argument? What do you like about my paper? What is confusing to you?

What are the Qualities of a Good Historical Paper?

The qualities that a judge is looking for in your NHD paper are written right on the evaluation sheet. Listed below is the same criteria judges will use to evaluate your paper. After you create your paper, go through this list and ask yourself if you've met the criteria or incorporated the following elements into your project.



Historical Quality – 60% (At 60%, the historical quality of your paper is by far the most important part!)

- My paper is historically accurate:** All the information in my paper is true to the best of my knowledge and supported by my evidence and research.
- I show analysis and interpretation:** My paper doesn't just recount facts or tell a story. I interpret and analyze my topic. My paper has a strong central thesis or argument that I prove. I can point to where I state my thesis in my paper.
- I place my topic in historical context:** My topic didn't take place in isolation. I made sure to place my topic into historical context – the intellectual, physical, social, and cultural setting for my topic.
- My project shows wide, balanced research and I used available primary sources:** These ideas all relate to the research behind your NHD paper. Judges will look carefully at your bibliography to learn more about your research process. They want to see that you investigated multiple perspectives about your topic and to see that you looked at all sides of an issue. They are looking for research using both primary and secondary sources and to see that you used a variety of source types.



Relation to Theme – 20%

- I clearly relate my topic to the theme:** My theme connection is clear in my paper itself.
- I demonstrates significance of my topic in history and draw conclusions:** My paper does more than just describe my topic. I explain why my topic is important in history or demonstrate its significance.



Clarity of Presentation – 20%

- My paper and written materials are original, clear, appropriate, organized, and well-presented:** I have an organized and well-written paper. I was careful to avoid plagiarism.
- My paper text is clear, grammar and spelling are correct and my entry is neatly prepared:** I have double-checked spelling and grammar in my paper, and bibliography. I have been careful to follow the NHD requirements in formatting my paper.



National History Day in Wisconsin
Wisconsin Historical Society

www.wisconsinhistory.org/teachers/historyday/
historyday@wisconsinhistory.org



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HISTORICAL
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National History Day Performances

What is a performance?

The History Day performance category allows you to create a play that conveys a historical argument with dramatic appeal. Innovative performances have made this category the highlight of many History Day events.

In creating a performance, it's important to remember that entries in this category are not oral reports about a topic. You will create a script, with characters, lines and costumes in order to convey your argument to the audience. Use your imagination and have fun!



The Basic Framework

- **Time Limit:** Your performance may not be longer than 10 minutes. This does not include your performance introduction (including only the title and participant names). Timing will begin after you introduce your project. You will have five additional minutes to set up your performance and five additional minutes to take it down.
- **Media:** You are able to use media in your performance, including CD players, computers, etc. However, only group members are allowed to run this equipment and you will have to provide the equipment yourselves.
- **Costumes:** Performers can find costumes in a variety of places. You can create your own or have one produced for you. You can also rent a costume from a store or borrow one from your school drama department. No matter what you do, the choice of pieces in the costume, choice of fabrics used and choice of design of the costume must be your own. You do not have to buy or rent expensive historically accurate costumes, but you are expected to consider the appropriateness of your clothing in relation to the time period and the script. For example, a student might wear a plain grey shirt and slacks to represent a Confederate soldier in the Civil War, understanding that a dark blue shirt and slacks wouldn't be appropriate.
- **Script:** You should bring an extra copy of your script to a competition in case you want to review your lines, but you should not include your script with the other written materials presented to your judges.
- **A Live Performance:** The very nature of the performance category means that performance are not pre-recorded. You will have to perform in front of an audience of judges and other viewers. Don't be afraid! The people watching your performance will be other students, teachers or family members and will all be there to support you.
- **Be sure to check the NHD Contest Rulebook for complete category rules!**

Why Should I Choose the Performance Category?



If you enjoy being on stage and performing in front of an audience, this is the category for you! You should enjoy creative writing and producing scripts. It's also important to have access to costumes and props and have the ability to transport them to competitions.

In choosing this category, it's important to think of the appropriateness of your topic for a performance. Is there a character or event that is related to your topic that you can turn into an effective argument about your topic? Are there various types of historical evidence that you can include in your performance, such as quotes, music, photographs, maps, etc.?

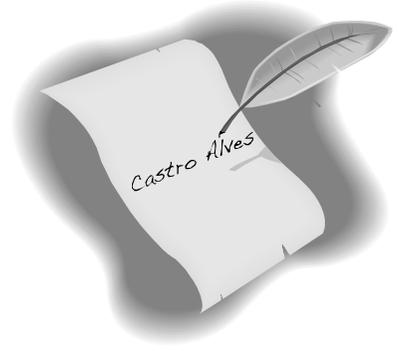
Elements of a History Day Performance

The Script

Your script is the most important element of your performance. It is the culmination of all your research and conveys your argument to the audience. The script must be an original creation of the student(s) working on the project.

History Day scripts are similar to other types of performances or plays. If you've never seen a script before, check your library or ask your teacher for an example to see how scripts are formatted.

Remember, this isn't a Broadway drama! Since your performance can only be 10 minutes long, you don't have a lot of space to write your script. You will be able to include about 5 pages (double-spaced) of script in a History Day performance.



Blocking & Stage Directions

In preparing your performance, it's important to think about how you will present your words to the audience. In addition to your lines, write stage direction for the actors. How should they deliver certain lines? Is the character angry? Happy? Sad? Where should they pause for dramatic effect or to let the character's words sink in? Where should each character be on the stage while delivering their lines? How do the characters interact with each other? Thinking about these elements before will help your performance to appear polished and consistent.

The Stage

The stage you will use to present your performance will vary at different History Day competitions. Most likely, you will have a classroom to share your performance. An area will be cleared at the front of the classroom and the desks will be set into rows for the audience. At other competitions, you may find that there is a stage or a platform in a lecture hall. No matter where you are, there will be room for group members to move around comfortably. You may or may not be able to operate the lights in your performance room.



Props & Set

History Day sets don't have to be elaborate. (In fact, elaborate sets can cause problems when it comes time to move them during competitions. You only have five minutes to set-up and an additional five minutes to take down your set.)

Every prop should have a use, and you should use every prop. When you have your script written, make a list of every object that a character **must** use, including furniture. If your list is huge, think about whether all the props are really necessary, or whether you can get away without certain items. Let the audience use their imaginations!

Costumes

An effective costume will help your audience understand who you are as a character and the time period in which your performance takes place. You can make your costume yourself, rent your costume or have one produced for you. However, according to NHD rules, the student(s) in the performance must make all the decisions about the costume, including the selection of materials, patterns or costume selection. Look at photographs, paintings or costume design books about the time period for inspiration.

Remember, effective costumes do not have to be elaborate. Plain clothing, with simple hats or coats can easily show an audience a change of character.

Media

You are allowed to include media in your performance, including the use of CD or tape players. Remember, you will need to provide all additional equipment to play these media elements and only group members may operate them.

Tips for Creating a Spectacular NHD Performance

Planning

Remember the NHD Criteria

Especially in the performance category, it's easy to get caught up in telling a story through drama. It's important to remember the purpose of your performance and the elements that the judges will be looking for:

Argument: A performance should clearly express an argument, just like a written paper. Incorporate it at the beginning to let your audience know what you will be proving. Make sure to incorporate it again at the end to reiterate your argument for the audience.

Historical Context: When researching and creating your performance, you should consider more than just the narrative of the topic. Think about what took place before or during the time period. How did these people, place or events influence your topic? This historical context is important to understanding your topic and making an argument.

Evidence: Just like other presentation categories, it's important to incorporate historical evidence that supports your argument. What lines can you include in your script that will show this evidence or support? For example, let's say that you are creating a group performance about Susan B. Anthony and the women's voting rights movement in the United States. A pro-voting rights character might give reasons that he or she thinks women should have the right to vote. These don't necessarily have to be quotations from the past, but should be the same arguments that women from the movement gave for demanding the right to vote.

In addition, are there quotations from primary sources, such as letters or diaries, which you can use in your script? Are there photographs or other visual elements that you can incorporate into your performance?



Putting It All Together



Be Historically Accurate

Your performance should appeal dramatically to the audience, but this shouldn't be at the expense of historical accuracy. Be creative when you make up characters, imagine scenes or write dialog. However, make sure there is a historical basis for the narrative of your performance. It's okay to imagine what Susan B. Anthony might have said to her supporters as she fought for women's right to vote, but it's not appropriate to contend that she fought against the vote. That wouldn't be based on historical fact.

Tips for Creating a Spectacular NHD Performance

Focus on Certain Characters During a Moment in History Rather Than Narrating an Entire Biography or Timeline

The characters depicted in your performance can be real or fictional, as long as they're supported by evidence. Before writing your script, brainstorm a list of people – famous or unknown – who were affected in one way or another by the historical topic you are researching. Consider each person's unique perspective on events. What scenes do you imagine for them as characters in a performance? How could different characters help express your argument?



Establish the Scene Right Away

Who are you? Where are you? What time period are you in? Who is your character talking to? Communicate the "who, what, where and when" early in your script. This will not only help you give a stronger performance, but will also let the audience tune in to your argument and ideas instead of trying to identify your topic and setting.

Less Can Be More

Remember the purpose of your History Day performance before getting too involved in elaborate scenes, props, character changes and costumes. Most of your effort should be put into your research, argument and a solid script.

Look it Over

The Performance Stands Alone

When evaluating NHD performances, the judges should be able to find all the information about your topic in the performance itself. The performance has to stand on its own. Have someone who has never seen your performance watch it (a friend, teacher, neighbor, etc.). After they have seen the performance, ask them a few questions to see if you have communicated your argument clearly: What am I trying to prove in my performance? What evidence have I shown to support that argument? What do you like about my performance? What is confusing to you?



Planning Your Performance

Research First

Since your research is the basis for your performance, it's only fitting that you should have a strong basis of research *before* you begin writing your script. No matter how tempting it is to dive in and begin writing a script, it's best to have your research done to understand the full range of possibilities open to you.

Brainstorm Your Options

Having a strong foundation of research will allow you to write a brief description of your topic. Then, think about all the possible answers to the following questions:

- What events, both major and minor, are connected to my topic?
- What characters, both famous and not, are connected to my topic?
- What scenes, both real and imagined, might I use in my performance?

Get Inspired

Check out other types of historical dramas or NHD performances to get inspired about what you might do through your performance. You can borrow sample performances from the NHD in Wisconsin office, or check out samples online through the national office at <http://www.nhd.org/ProjectExamples.htm>

Develop Your Characters

Once you've decided on your characters, it's time to "get into your character's head," whether you're portraying a real or fictional person.

- How does the character dress? How does the character speak?
- What is the character's personality or mood?
- What was life like for someone like this character?
- What does the character think about events in his or her time period?
- What kinds of social behavior would someone in this character's time or situation portray?

Outline the Basics of Your Performance

Before you begin writing your script, take the time to outline the basics of your performance. You don't want to get too far into your writing and then realize that a certain aspect of your performance won't work. This is also a great time to think about how you will make transitions in time and characters in your performance, if applicable.

- What sections are you going to break your performance into?
- Where are you stating your argument?
- How does each part of your performance support your argument?
- What evidence or primary source might you be able to incorporate and where?
- Where do you show how your topic is connected to the them?
- How do you address historical context through your performance?

Edit It Down

About five pages of double space script will be enough to fill 10 minutes of performance. You may have to make some difficult decisions as to what you are and are not able to include. Remember that your historical argument and evidence are the most important parts of your performance. When you have finished a draft of your script, highlight the parts that express your argument in one color and specific supporting evidence in a different color. If it looks like there's not enough of one color on the script, it may be time for some editing! It should be easier to see what parts of your performance you may be able to edit out.

Practice, Practice, Practice!

Having a working script done is just the beginning. Keep rehearsing to learn your lines and to practice speaking at the right speed, volume and tone. As you go through your lines, take time to block out where your characters will stand, how they will move and what props they might need to use. If possible, ask someone to tape record your performance. You can watch it later to see how the performance looks from the audience's perspective.

Going to a NHD Competition with a Performance

Presenting a project in the performance category at a History Day competition is similar to presenting projects in other categories. At your assigned time, you will have the chance to share your work with the judges. This is how a presentation in the performance category usually works:

- **Set-Up:** You have five minutes to set up your set and props for your performance. Your judges will ask for your process paper and bibliography before you set up so that they can begin looking at it. Remember, only group members should set up the props and any background. Once you are set-up, wait for the judges signal begin your performance.
- **Performance**
- **Take-Down:** Take down your set and move your props to the side of the room or into the hallway. Make sure to be as quiet as possible while you are doing this as there may be other presentations going on in the same area. You have five more minutes to take down.
- **Interview:** Don't be afraid of the interview! This is your chance to help your judges understand your argument and highlight any cool research that you have done. Remember, the interview isn't a memorized presentation for the judges. You will respond to the questions they ask, such as "How did you choose your topic?" or "Why do you think your topic is significant in history?" However, also do not dismiss the interview. This is the time to show off all the knowledge you gained in your research that you might not have been able to fit in your performance!

Frequently Asked Questions About Performances

Does my performance have to be memorized?

There isn't a rule that says that your performance has to be memorized, but it's best if it is. Memorizing your script will help you focus on *how* you say your lines versus just reading a script to your audience. Finally, memorized lines contribute to good stage presence, which is part of clarity of presentation on the History Day evaluation sheet.

What props might be available at the competition?

To be safe, it's best to bring all the props necessary to a competition. You're likely to find a chair or table at a competition, however, these are not guaranteed. If you have questions, be sure to check with the contest coordinator.

What happens if I go over the time limit?

Going a few seconds over the time limit with your performance isn't the end of the world. Judges will understand that you may be nervous and that this may happen. What isn't appropriate is to go *significantly* over the time limit, as this would give you an unfair disadvantage over other projects. If you do go significantly over time, the judges will take this into consideration in your final ranking. When planning and rehearsing your performance, try to plan extra time to allow for audience response or forgotten lines at a competition.

What do I give judges at the competition?

Before you begin your performance, your judges will ask for copies of your process paper and annotated bibliography. You should not give them a copy of your script or copies of your research.

A Few Final Reminders:

- **Be Confident!** You're the expert on your topic. You've spent a lot of time researching and creating your performance and should be proud of all your hard work.
- **Speak Slowly and Loudly:** It's easy to get nervous and rush through your lines, but take a breath and slow down. This is the first time your audience has seen your performance and they need to be able to hear and understand your words.
- **Have Fun!** The History Day event is your opportunity to share your research with other scholars. Take the time to learn from the other projects you see, meet new people and enjoy yourself!



What are the Qualities of a Good Performance?

The qualities that a judge is looking for in your NHD performance are written right on the evaluation sheet. Listed below is the same criteria judges will use to evaluate your performance. After you create your performance, go through this list and ask yourself if you've met the criteria or incorporated the information into your project.



Historical Quality – 60% (At 60%, the historical quality of your performance is by far the most important)

- My performance is historically accurate:** All the information in my performance is true to the best of my knowledge.
- I show analysis and interpretation:** My performance doesn't just recount facts or tell a story. I interpret and analyze my topic. My performance has a strong central thesis or argument that I prove. I can point to where I state my thesis in my script.
- I place my topic in historical context:** My topic didn't take place in isolation. I made sure to place my topic into historical context – the intellectual, physical, social, and cultural setting for my topic.
- My project shows wide, balanced research and I used available primary sources:** These ideas all relate to the research behind your NHD performance. Judges will look carefully at your bibliography to learn more about your research process. They want to see that you investigated multiple perspectives about your topic and to see that you looked at all sides of an issue. They are looking for research using both primary and secondary sources and to see that you used a variety of source types.



Relation to Theme – 20%

- I clearly relate my topic to the theme:** My theme connection is clear in my performance itself.
- I demonstrates significance of my topic in history and draw conclusions:** My performance does more than just describe my topic. I explain why my topic is important in history or demonstrate its significance.



Clarity of Presentation – 20%

- My performance and written materials are original, clear, appropriate and organized:** I have an organized and well-written project. I was careful to avoid plagiarism and I have double-checked spelling and grammar in my performance, process paper and bibliography.
- Performers show good stage presence; props, costumes and historically accurate:** I have used the performance category to effectively communicate my historical argument. My lines are memorized and I deliver them in a manner that is easy for my audience to understand. I have carefully chosen my staging, props and costumes to best represent my topic and its time period.



National History Day in Wisconsin
Wisconsin Historical Society

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National History Day Web Sites

What is a web site?

A History Day web site is a computer-based representation of your research and argument that incorporates both textual and non-textual content (e.g. images, songs, interviews, videos, and other media) to engage and inform your viewer about your topic. A web site is more than just an electronic paper or an exhibit on a computer. Through a web site you are able to incorporate non-textual elements with which a viewer can interact. These elements help to differentiate web sites from other categories.

The web site category is the newest National History Day category, first appearing at the national contest in 2008.



The Basic Framework

- **Size Limit:** The overall file size of your web site can be no more than 100MB of file space, including all multimedia.
- **Word Limit:** The web site may contain no more than 1,200 visible, student-composed words. This means that the words that you write that are visible to the viewer count towards your word limit. If you didn't write it, it doesn't count towards the limit. You can use quotations from other sources and it won't count against your 1,200 words. Words that are not visible to the viewer – code used to build the site and alternate text tags on images – do not count against the limit, either.

Examples of things that count	Examples of things that don't count
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Captions• Text in graphs, charts, or timelines that you create yourself• Words that you write that appear on your web pages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reoccurring menus, titles, and navigation instructions that are used as an integral part of the web site.• Quotations• Text in graphs, charts or timelines that you do not create yourself• Brief text crediting the source of an illustration, quotation, or piece of media• Code used to build the site, and alternate text tags on images

- **Be sure to check the most recent version of the *NHD Contest Rulebook* for complete category rules!**

Why Should I Choose the Web Site Category?

The web site category is great for people who enjoy working with computers and the web. If you've ever wanted to learn how to build a web site, now is your chance. While many topics can be effectively conveyed using the web site category, this category is especially suitable for topics that have a variety of non-textual materials (media, photos, documents, timelines, illustrations, newspaper articles, etc.) that can be used to support your argument.

Since this category requires additional equipment and supplies, you should make sure you have access to this equipment before you start. Do you, at home or school, have access to a computer with internet access? You will need to use the **NHD web site editor**, available online, to build and submit your website and you must have a computer with internet access to do this.

Interactivity

A good History Day web site is not just a paper translated into HTML and viewed in an internet browser. Your site should actively teach viewers about your topic. Imagine that the viewer has just arrived at your site. How did you catch their attention and curiosity? How do you get them involved in learning about your topic? Your site should incorporate some interactive elements to help accomplish this.

What are interactive elements?

There are many different interactive elements that you can include in your web site to engage your viewer in learning about your topic, such as image maps, pop-up windows, sound, videos, timelines, or databases.

Not all interactive elements are created equal

Make sure your interactivity helps interpret your topic. Interactive elements should give the viewer a better understanding of the information and ideas that you're presenting. For example, if your topic was a particular Civil War soldier, an interactive map that follows the path of the soldier's regiment would help the viewer understand where the events you're describing took place. On the other hand, a quiz that simply reviews factual information found elsewhere in the site would not interpret your topic because it would not provide the audience with a new understanding.

Interactive elements don't have to be high-tech!

You don't have to be a professional web designer or have years of experience to incorporate interactive elements into your web site. Look at other history web sites to see how they engage their viewers.

- Think about the example above, the interactive map that follows the path of the Civil War soldier's regiment. You could design an image map that would allow the viewer to click on battle locations. Maybe a window pops up giving you a historic photo of that location. Maybe the pop-up window includes a letter that soldier wrote while at that site.
- Or, let's say you're creating a web site about the Black Hawk War. You want to include portions of the 1804 treaty between the government and two representatives of the Sauk nation. This treaty set the stage for the conflict to occur 25 years later and is an important part of the story. Links on key words in the document could take viewers to a more detailed explanation of the word or idea.

Non-Textual Content

Non-Textual Content

Interactive elements, media, and other non-textual context woven with text make the web site category unique. Depending on your topic, there's a variety of non-textual elements that you could include in your web site: documents, artifacts, oral history selections, quotations, photographs, paintings, video clips, songs, newspaper articles, or a recording from an interview. (Remember: Your multimedia cannot total more than four minutes and must fit within your overall size limit of 100 MB.)

Incorporating Non-Textual Content into your Web Site

Non-textual content should do more than just illustrate or decorate a page. Brainstorm what photographs, documents, maps, etc. will help the viewer better understand your argument. How will each element do this? Incorporate historical evidence for your viewer to examine and discover. Documents, photographs, or newspapers are good way to do this. Consider lower resolution, smaller thumbnails with links to larger resolution, easily legible versions. Think about ways to use non-textual primary source elements as proof for your argument.

- You will have to edit photos, songs, videos, and other media outside of the NHD Website Editor before uploading!

Add Your Interpretation

Pages of illustrations, media clips, or documents without a purpose for being on the web site will not help you prove your argument. Adding interpretive captions, rather than just descriptive, will help the viewer understand how that element builds your overall argument and gives it a purpose for being on your web site.

Similarly, putting all of your photos or media clips in a separate "photo gallery" page doesn't help tie this support to your argument. Integrate the text and non-textual elements. (Putting all the illustrations on a separate page would be similar to a documentary only having text for the first five minutes and only photographs for the last five. It would be boring and not make much sense!)

Web Site Organization and Variation

After completing your research, your next step is to begin planning your web site. You will have to decide:

1. How you want to divide your information into different web pages.
2. How you want to organize those pages within your site.

These are important decisions that need to be made before you even begin constructing your site on the computer. The way you organize and present your information gives physical form to your argument.

Dividing Your Information into Web Pages

You have a lot of choices as to how you can divide your research and argument into different pages on your site. Time, location, or topic are just a few of the general categories into which you can sort information. Different categories will help you to make different arguments through your web site. For example, a web site about the Black Hawk War could be organized chronologically, sorted by battle or by groups of people involved in the conflict. How would each of these organizational formats help or hinder a viewer's understanding of the topic?

To get started, think about your information as if you were writing an outline for a paper. How would you divide up your material into major sections? How does each section support your argument? Now, think of another way you could divide the information (chronologically, topically, by location, etc.). Which system do you think will make more sense to your viewer?



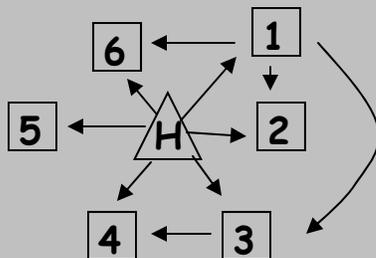
No matter how you choose to divide your information up—each page should fit together to support your thesis. How do the ideas on each page connect to the others?

Web Site Organization

You're not just building different *web pages*, you're building a *web site*. You have to give your site an overall organization that is logical and easy to navigate. There are many ways to do this and building your site on paper first will give you a chance to play with these organizational structures before you put time and energy into construction. Here are a few examples:

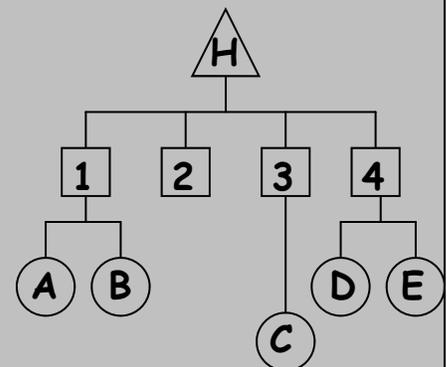


Linear organization assumes that a viewer is going to go from one page to the next in a very specific order.



Spider web organization is designed to let the viewer explore the web site in a variety of ways. Since the pages are one level deep, it assumes that information is equally important. Note: Not all pages have to link together.

Hierarchical organization is also designed to let the viewer explore the web site in a variety of ways. However, since there are multiple levels of pages, you can organize the more important



information to be closer to the homepage and the supporting information to be deeper in the site.

NHD Web Site Category Rules

Individual and Group Categories Split for Competition

Individual and group projects will be split for the purposes of NHD competitions. Individual entries will only compete against other individual entries in each division. Group entries will only compete against other group entries in each division.

Important Rule Change Implemented in 2014

Multimedia

All together, the multimedia clips (audio, video, or both) cannot total more than four minutes and may not include student composed narration. All multimedia must be stored within the site, you may not use embedded material hosted elsewhere (i.e. YouTube or Google Video). There is no limit to the number of multimedia clips other than the file size limit. Voiceover of material not composed by students is allowed. If an entry uses any form of multimedia requiring a plug-in (for example, Flash, QuickTime or Real Player), you must provide on the same page a link to an Internet site where the plug-in is available as a free, secure, and legal download. Judges will make every effort to view all multimedia content, but files that cannot be viewed cannot be evaluated as part of the entry.

- All content used in the web site must be uploaded through and hosted by the NHD Website Editor.
- Students may continue to use content that they find elsewhere, but they must download it, edit it to fit time limits, and then re-upload it through the NHD Web Site Editor.

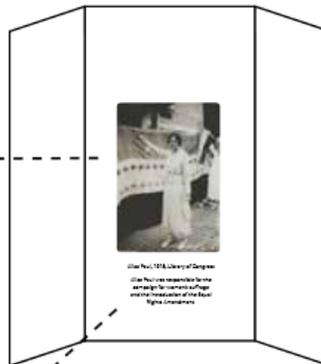
Multimedia

ALL visual materials must have a citation or brief credit directly with them, as well as in the bibliography. This will not count toward your word limit. An example from the Rulebook can be seen here:



Alice Paul, 1918, Library of Congress

Alice Paul was responsible for the campaign for women's suffrage and the introduction of the Equal Rights Amendment.



A brief, **FACTUAL CREDIT** is **REQUIRED** and does **NOT** count toward the 500-word limit.

A caption **DOES** count toward the 500-word limit.

Though it is for an exhibit, the same applies for visual material on your website.

Be sure to read the complete general and category-specific rules before creating your NHD website, available online at www.nhd.org/ - search "Rulebook."

10 Tips for Creating a Spectacular NHD Web Site

Tech Check

Creating a web site involves different resources than other categories. To create and submit an NHD website, you will need to use the **NHD website editor**, which is available online. This means you will need access to a computer with an internet connection. Check with your teacher and/or parent to see if technology is available at home or school. Where will you have to do the majority of your work?

Research Comes First!

Research is the most important part of a successful History Day project. Don't begin playing with the software until you have a solid foundation of research and analysis.

Organize, Organize, Organize!

Before putting your thoughts into HTML, put them onto paper. How do you want to break up your information into various pages? Will it be sorted by topic area? Around a timeline? How will you emphasize your thesis? What kinds of visual materials and multimedia would you like to have, and what can you manage technically? How can you get your audience actively involved in learning about your topic?

- **Make Your Argument Clear:** Don't hide your argument! Put your thesis on the first page as part of an introduction to the web site.
- **A Cohesive Web Site:** Remember, you're not making separate web pages—you're making an **entire web site**. A clear cohesive argument should unite everything. Don't just put something on a page "just because it's cool" or fill a page with random facts. All pages and elements should support your argument and have a purpose for being there.

Develop Your Template

Designing your template is an important step in deciding how you are going to convey your information to your audience. The choices you make about style, fonts, colors, etc. make an impression upon your viewer even before they read a word. The NHD website editor offers you many template pages that you can use to create a web site, but think carefully about the template. Does the format of the template fit with your design and organization ideas?

Through the NHD website editor, you also have the option of customizing the template and layout you are using. Don't be intimidated by this option—the help documents within this program can offer you more information! Creating your own template for a web site doesn't mean that you have to reinvent web formats. Look at other history web sites to see what formatting they have used to communicate their information. (You can always look at their code to see how they built their site.) Taking time to create your own basic layout – header, footer, colors, fonts, etc. – that can be duplicated for the entire site.

- **Your Color Scheme: Not just your site's pretty face:** Pick colors for your background, text and links that are not just attractive, but also help your audience understand what your project is about. Your design should connect to your topic. For example, a website about Women's Suffrage could have a scheme of purple and white, as those are the colors suffragettes used for their cause.
- **Use a Common Font:** Use a "browser safe font" like Times New Roman or Arial for your body text. This ensures that your font will be the same for each viewer. Fancy fonts can be great for highlights and titles, but they can be difficult to read and probably won't work on your viewer's computer. If you download a cool font to use in your web site, keep in mind that your viewers' computers will translate it into another font unless the text is saved within a .jpg or .gif image that you create.
- **Use the Same Basic Layout on Every Page:** Your site will be easier for viewers to use if each page has navigation buttons and content in about the same places. It's always helpful to have a header with your web sites' title on each page.
- **Strive for Clarity:** You want your viewers to understand the content of your web site, and not struggle to read it. Remember that background images can make text difficult to read and long paragraphs or blocks of text can be difficult to read on computer screens.

The Homepage

One page of the web site must serve as the “home page.” To create this page, keep in mind the following:

- Your homepage must include the names of the participants, entry title, division, and a main web site menu that directs viewers to various sections of the site.
- Don’t hide your thesis! The homepage is a great place to give an introduction to your project, including your thesis. Let your viewer know right away the argument you will be making.
- Your homepage does not have to include a description of why you are creating the web site or of National History Day. Since this web site is not for the general public, your viewers will already be aware of the program and the purpose of the site. Save your words for your subject!
- Your process paper and annotated bibliography should be included as an integral part of the web site (but will not count towards the word limit).

Content is More Important Than Glitz

Computers can do a lot of cool things, but think about the NHD criteria and remember the most important elements of your web site: analysis, interpretation, historical context and connection to theme. In order to make sure these ideas are clear for your viewer, make sure your web site design is easy to read and understand. Keep decorative animation and clip art to an absolute minimum and avoid “busy” background images and other clutter. It’s also a good idea to include some blank space in your pages so the viewer isn’t overwhelmed.

Give Credit Where Credit is Due

As in all NHD categories, you must give credit for and make apparent which materials are not yours, such as illustrations, media, movies, applications, scripts, forms, etc. These materials should have a complete citation in the annotated bibliography. It is also a good idea to give a brief text crediting the source on the site, such as “Photo from the Wisconsin Historical Society.” Remember these brief credits do not count against your word limit.

When borrowing or using someone else’s coding or scripting, you must give them credit just as you would with other materials. Please note that the credit for these materials must be given in a manner that is visible to the average user, not just in the code itself. If you are using a credits page, please be specific as to what each script or code does and its author.

When using quotations, either from primary or secondary sources, it is your job to make it clear to the judges that these are not your words. Judges will need to know this to obtain an accurate word count for your project. Furthermore, including other people’s work under the impression that it’s yours is plagiarism.

Test It Out

Before you are finished with your site for judging, triple-check your site to make sure it works! Make sure that your site has been “published” (is viewable on the internet) and is NOT password protected.

Submitting Web Sites to Competition.

Contact your contest coordinator for the most current registration materials for registering and submitting your web site for competition. A few points to keep in mind:

- You will have to create your web site through the NHD website editor beginning at the school level. Creating your web site within the NHD program will allow it to be submitted for competition online.
- Your website will need to be submitted in advance of the competition in order for the judges to have adequate time to review the project before the competition. This means that your final version of the site will need to be ready by the registration deadline, usually two weeks before the competition. Once the registration deadline passes, you will be unable to make further changes to your site for that competition.

The Web Site Stands Alone

When evaluating NHD web sites, judges should be able to find all the information about your topic in your web site itself. The web site has to stand on its own. Have someone who has never seen your web site look at it (a friend, teacher, neighbor, etc.). Without saying anything, let them read through the entire web site. Then, ask them a few questions to see if you have communicated your argument clearly: What am I trying to prove in my web site? What evidence have I shown to support that argument? What do you like about my web site? What is confusing to you?

History Day Web Site Planning

Professional web designers think about building a web site like building a house. First the architect decides the important features of the house (such as how many bedrooms the house will have and how many square feet it will be). Next they draw the house on paper, plotting out the kitchen, bathroom and living room and making sure these elements are arranged in a way that will be comfortable for the family living there. Only after plans are finished and double checked does anyone pick up a hammer to begin construction. Prior planning and building your web site in the right order will save you a lot of time, energy and frustration.

Research

As in all other History Day categories, good research is the first step and foundation for your web site. After completing your primary and secondary source research, you will have the following pieces of information ready for the web site:

- Thesis
- Connection to theme (remember, it's your job to show how your topic connects to the theme!)
- Project title

Figure Out What You Need in Your Site

As the web designer, it's your job to decide what you want your audience to learn from your web site and to brainstorm ways that you can teach them. Using note cards or pieces of paper, write down the major ideas you have about your topic. You can layout these cards and rearrange them to understand how the ideas fit together. What categories do they fall into? What logical order should they be arranged in? How do these ideas relate to my thesis? Once you feel comfortable with these categories, they will become the pages of your web site.

- Page titles

Create Your Blueprints

You can create the blueprints for your web site by using unlined paper to draft what will go on each page and how it will be organized.

- 1. Site Design:** What is the template for the web site? Are you going to create one yourself? What colors, fonts and general style will you use on the site? How will all the pages link together to create the entire site?
 - Page template
 - Diagram of the organization web pages created
- 2. Page Content:** What are the headings for each of the pages? What information should go on each page? Remember, drafting your text during this step in a word processing program will be much easier than writing it in the web design program.
 - First draft of text for pages
- 3. Non-Textual Content and Interactive Elements:** As you draft your site on paper, you will also have to decide what non-textual content (illustrations, media, etc.) and interactive elements you will include. What photos or multimedia are available? How will each piece help the viewer understand your argument and topic? How can you engage the viewer through interactive elements?
 - Non-textual content selected and edited *before* uploading into NHD Website Editor
 - Captions written
 - Interactive elements identified and planned

Look It Over

Once you have your first paper draft of the web site ready, look it over to see how all the elements fit together. Have a teacher, friend or a family member look it over to get feedback from an outside observer before you begin.

Begin Construction

After taking these initial steps, you're ready to begin constructing your web site. Become familiar with the NHD web site editor and start translating your ideas into reality!

What are the Qualities of a Good Web Site?

The qualities that a judge is looking for in your NHD web site are written right on the evaluation sheet. Listed below is the same criteria judges will use to evaluate your web site. After you create your web site, go through this list and ask yourself if you've met the criteria or incorporated the information into your project.



Historical Quality – 60% (At 60%, the historical quality of your web site is by far the most important)

- My web site is historically accurate:** All the information in my web site is true to the best of my knowledge.
- I show analysis and interpretation:** My web site doesn't just recount facts or tell a story. I interpret and analyze my topic. My web site has a strong central thesis or argument that I prove. I can point to where I state my thesis in my web site.
- I place my topic in historical context:** My topic didn't take place in isolation. I made sure to place my topic into historical context – the intellectual, physical, social and cultural setting for my topic.
- My project shows wide, balanced research and I used available primary sources:** These ideas all relate to the research behind your NHD web site. Judges will look carefully at your bibliography to learn more about your research process. They want to see that you investigated multiple perspectives about your topic and to see that you looked at all sides of an issue. They are looking for research using both primary and secondary sources and to see that you used a variety of source types.



Relation to Theme – 20%

- I clearly relate my topic to the theme:** My theme connection is clear in my web site itself.
- I demonstrates significance of my topic in history and draw conclusions:** My web site does more than just describe my topic. I explain why my topic is important in history or demonstrate its significance.



Clarity of Presentation – 20%

- My web site and written materials are original, clear, appropriate, and organized:** I have an organized and well-written project. I was careful to avoid plagiarism and I have double-checked spelling and grammar in my web site, process paper and bibliography.
- My web site has visual impact, uses multimedia effectively and actively involved the viewer:** I thought about the overall design and organization of my web site. I chose multimedia and interactive elements to help viewers understand my topic and prove my argument.



Rules Compliance

- My site has no more than **1200** student composed **words**.
- My site is no larger than **100 MB**.
- My media clips are no longer than **45 seconds**.
- My **process paper** and **bibliography** are included in my website.