

Please Note: According to district policy, parents/guardians of St. Paul Public School students currently participating in History Day are not allowed to serve as judges at the St. Paul Public Schools District Contest. We would appreciate your help judging at any of our other events!

I've never judged History Day before. Is that ok?

Absolutely! We welcome veteran judges and new judges. There will be an orientation to take place one hour before judging begins. We will have time for questions. Judging teams will consist of veteran and novice judges.

What qualifications are needed to be a History Day judge?

There are no required qualifications to judge a History Day event. However, judges should possess an interest in history and be comfortable interacting with students and making decisions. A critical eye as well as the willingness to give your time as well as constructive feedback is important.

Can high school students judge?

At the Regional/District, State, and National levels of competition, high school students are NOT allowed to judge, even if they are enrolled in PSEO classes. Contact the event coordinator if you are interested in serving as a volunteer in another capacity.

How do I sign up to become a judge?

You can sign up on our website by filling out this online form. You will be asked which Regional event(s) at which you plan to judge. You will receive a confirmation letter about two weeks before the event with instructions, and an e-mail a few days before the event for a reminder.

How does judging work?

The easiest way to understand how judging works is to see it in person or watch our video. In general, you will arrive about an hour before judging begins for an orientation. You will meet your judge team and get a schedule of projects to view. Website judges will have gotten the URLs in advance and are expected to have viewed these projects before the contest. Judges view projects and interview students. Once they have seen all the projects, judges will discuss, rank top entries, and write comments, which will be returned to students in the week following the event.

What if I have a special category request for judging or a dietary or mobility consideration. How can I let you know?

When you sign-up as a judge you can let us know about any special requests.

- *Judging Requests: When judges sign-up, we collect information on their preferences for category and/or judge partner. We do our best to accommodate all requests, but ask judges to be understanding if we cannot.*
- *Dietary Restrictions: Given the food delivery options, event coordinators are only able to accommodate a limited number of dietary requests, including vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free. Event coordinators must know about dietary restrictions in advance of the contest, so please include this information in your judge sign-up.*
- *Mobility Considerations: Some judge roles require extended periods of either sitting or standing. Please let us know if you are uncomfortable in either of these situations, so we can assign you appropriately.*

What is the Final-Round and do I have to stay for it?

There is a Final-Round for the Exhibit and Website categories at the Regional events. One member of each team must stay after the initial judging process to participate in the Final-Round with members from other teams in your category. You will need to decide with your partner who will be your group representative. This group of Final-Round judges will decide who is advancing to the next level of competition.

I feel I need more training than the orientation before the event. Are there other judge training opportunities?

Yes. There is a judge training in February and in April before the State competition. History Day staff will give a more detailed description of the judging process. Attendees will go through a mock judging process and look at and dissect project examples. Veteran and novice judges are welcome.

Will I know which category I am judging before I arrive?

It depends. We will alert Website judges about a week before the contest so they can review their projects in advance. If you are an Exhibit, Performance, or Documentary judge, we will not be able to tell you which specific category you will be judging. We are getting ready for the competition right up until the event begins. As other judges drop-out or sign-up, our judge assignment list constantly changes, right up until the contest begins.

What kinds of questions should I ask the students?

Questions during the judging process should give the student the opportunity to tell you what they learned while creating their project. The judge should never talk more than the student, or make them feel as though they have not done enough research. Questions about their research process, sources used, inspirations for the topic, and what they liked about the project are all appropriate questions.

How long does it take for a judge to write comments?

It varies. Most judges will spend at least an hour writing comments after they are done viewing projects. Some judges will be done earlier, especially if they have judged Websites and written preliminary comments in advance. Some judges will take longer if they have a lot to say. If you would prefer to type your comments, you are welcome to bring a laptop to the contest. Flash drives will be provided for you to turn in your comments.

Can I get Continuing Education Unit Clock Hours (CEUs) for judging?

Yes, staff will have CEUs printed and ready to hand out at the event. All you have to do is ask a staff member.

How do you ensure fair judging if teachers or parents are serving as judges?

In general, people affiliated with History Day students or schools are still allowed to serve as judges. Teachers, former teachers, and community members should identify the schools with which they have affiliations during their judge sign-up. The History Day staff will assign judges with conflicts to different categories/divisions. When you get to an event, please look over your schedule to see if there are students you know and alert us if there are conflicts. It's not a problem to switch you before judging begins!

I don't feel comfortable judging, but want to help. Are there other roles I can help with?

At any contest, our biggest need is for judges. We may have a limited number of non-judging roles available. Contact the event coordinator to find out.