national **history** day **MN**

INTRODUCING

NATIONAL

HISTORY DAY 2021

Almost everything you need to know to get started on your History Day adventure!

_____

Your name here!

MINNESOTA
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

COLLEGE OF **LIBERAL ARTS**
 . UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Your History Day adventure is divided into three parts: **Research, Analysis,** and **Presentation.**

1. Research
Historical research is the foundation for your History Day project.

2. Analysis
Figure out what it all means and create a historical thesis.

3. Presentation
Design and create a project to share your information.

The Annual History Day Theme

Each year National History Day selects a theme. Every student who participates in History Day has to connect their topic to the theme. Themes are designed to be very broad. You can pick topics connected to local, state, national, or world history.

Why do we need a theme? The theme unites all History Day students around the country and world. The annual theme will also help you to see the connections between your topic and bigger issues in history. Your History Day project will be about more than dates and facts. It will be about the historical significance of your topic.

2021: Communication in History: The Key to Understanding

Many people will think of topics related to communication technology after hearing about this year's National History Day theme. With a little more creativity, you can connect all kinds of topics to "Communication in History."

Start with the definition.
There are many ways that people communicate, but most forms of communication involve:
- Using words, sounds, signs, or behaviors…
- To express or exchange information, ideas, thoughts or feelings

What interests you?
Think about an area of history that interests you. Art? Politics? Agriculture? Medicine? Local History? Social issues? It's important that you are interested in your topic.

Things to Consider
- **What was being communicated? Why?** What was someone hoping to influence or change? Did they want to call attention to or solve a problem? Did they want to build support for a new idea, new system, or a leader?
- **How was it communicated?** Some communication happened physically through newspapers, printing, or the internet. Messages were also shared orally, through the telephone, television, or speeches. You might also find topics where communication happened through art or music, sign language, carrier pigeons to send messages, or movements to teach young people indigenous languages, like Hawaiian or Ojibwe.
- **What impact did it have?** It's your job as a historian to figure out the impact by answering the question "so what." The impact of your topic in history may be positive or negative. What did the communication lead to? What changed? Which people or what events were influenced by it?
- **Have you considered other points of view?** Who was the intended audience for the message? How did others respond to it? Which values or beliefs were represented in this message? Which values or beliefs were missing?
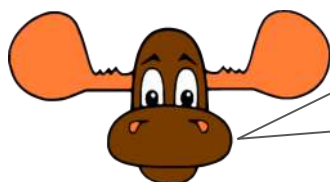
Take a look at the theme sheet from Minnesota History Day or from National History Day for more information on the theme and topic ideas!

https://www.mnhs.org/historyday/theme-and-topics

SELECTING A TOPIC

The combination of a good topic with good research will give you a good start to your project. What makes a "good topic" for History Day?

- **The topic fits the theme**. Your topic needs to have a connection to the History Day theme. You may need to do some research to figure this out.
- **You are interested in this topic**. You will spend a lot of time researching your topic. It helps if you want to learn more. If you're working in a group, all members should agree on the topic.
- **There is research out there about the topic**. Do some basic searching to figure out if there are a variety of primary and secondary sources you can find connected to your topic.
- **Your topic has significance**. You will make an argument about how your topic was important in history. This doesn't mean you need a world- famous topic - but you need to be able to say how the topic changed history.. Even local history topics had an impact in history.
- **Your topic is historic**. If your topic is too recent, you're going to have a hard time figuring out the topic's long-term significance in history.
  Select a topic that took place at least 20 years in the past.
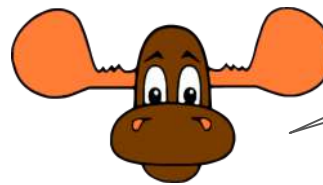
Like your topic. You will
be spending a lot of time with it!

WORKSHEET: TOPIC BRAINSTORM

To pick a topic, start with a general area of history you find interesting. This might be something you read about in your textbook or something related to family history. Using the chart below, brainstorm one topic in each category that fits this year's theme.

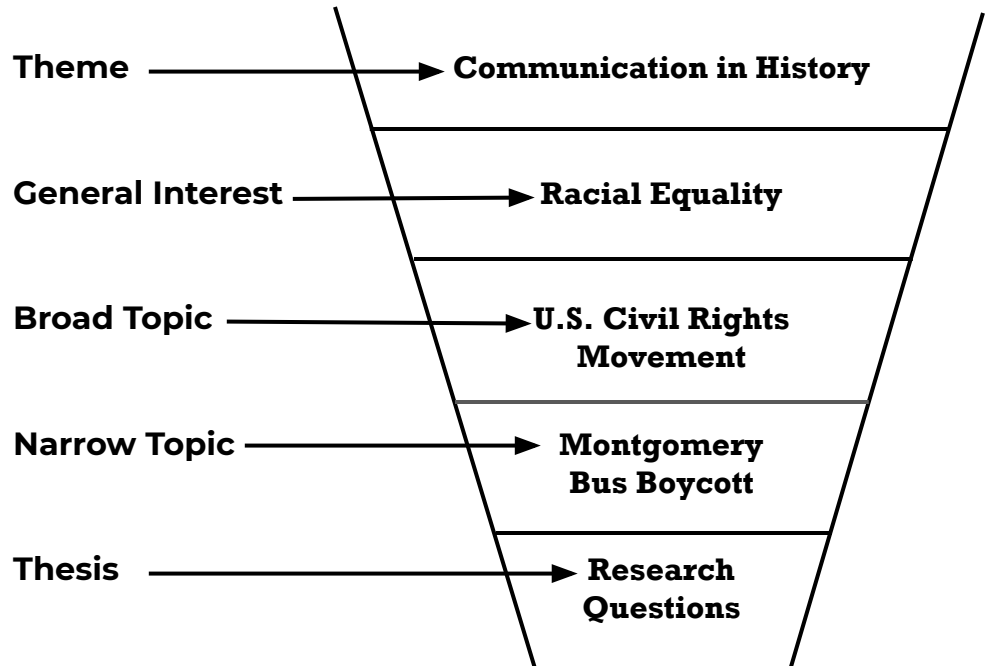| **Politics**	**The Environment**
Topic Idea:	Topic Idea:
Civil Rights	**Social Issues**
Topic Idea:	Topic Idea:
Military History	**Religion**
Topic Idea:	Topic Idea:
Science & Technology	**Education**
Topic Idea:	Topic Idea:
Business	**Arts, Music, & Culture**
Topic Idea:	Topic Idea:

NARROWING YOUR TOPIC

Once you know your general interest, the next step is to narrow your general idea into a more focused topic. **Why?** History Day projects aren't huge. If you pick a topic that's too big, you're not going to have enough space or time to include all the information you want in your project.

Consider this example. Your group is interested in **racial equality movements**, but realizes that this topic needs to be narrowed down. You decide to research "**U.S. Civil Rights Movement.**" However, this topic is still too broad. You have not defined the "where" and "when" for your study.

At this point, your group decides to focus on one big action or protest that happened during the movement.

After doing some research, you learn about how the Montgomery Bus Boycott helped start the movement.

This would be a great, narrow topic to focus on for History Day!

Theme → **Communication in History**

General Interest → **Racial Equality**

Broad Topic → **U.S. Civil Rights Movement**

Narrow Topic → **Montgomery Bus Boycott**

Thesis → **Research Questions**

Your narrowing won't stop there. As you dig into this topic you will come up with **research questions**. What was happening in Montgomery, Alabama? What sort of opposition did they face? How did their actions change history?

WORKSHEET: TOPIC FUNNEL
Using the funnels below, try narrowing down two of your general interests into more focused topics.

Communication in History: The Key to Understanding

Theme

Communication in History: The Key to Understanding

General Interest

Broad Topic

Narrow Topic

FINDING INFORMATION

Research Strategy
It is important to have a **research strategy** to help you gather information. Your strategy has two parts:
1. Find sources of information
2. Keep track of notes and sources

Where should I start?
The best place to begin your search is in your school or local library. An encyclopedia is a good place to find basic information about a topic. Searching the Internet may also lead to some primary and secondary sources. **It is important to find other sources of information and not depend only on encyclopedias and the Internet.**

> Books containing footnotes or a bibliography can provide you with listings of many other sources that the author used for their research, both primary and secondary, relating to your topic.

How can I find more sources?
Once you have collected the basic information on your topic, you may want to try to locate some unique sources. Consider looking for primary sources and more scholarly secondary sources at:
- **Municipal, County, or College Libraries:** These libraries have more resources than a school. They are especially helpful because they sometimes have primary sources, such as old newspapers.
- **Historical Societies:** If your topic is on Minnesota history, a historical society may be helpful. State and local historical societies specialize in collecting information about Minnesota. Some historical societies and archives also have specialized collections that relate to national topics.
- **Interviews:** If people connected to your topic are still living, you can conduct oral history interviews with them. Contact your interview subject to set up a time and place to meet. Write your questions in advance and be prepared to take notes or record the interview. If you cannot meet in person you can send them questions in the mail, by e-mail or over the phone. Make sure to remember to send a thank you note to them afterwards!
- **Talk To a Librarian:** One of the best resources for finding information on your topic is a librarian or media specialist. These people are professional information-gatherers!

Using the Internet for History Day Research
The Internet is an extraordinary resource for research of all kinds, but it is not the answer to all your History Day research challenges.
- **The Internet is a great place to start your research,** find basic information about your topic, or even figure out ways to narrow a topic.
  - The **Electronic Library of Minnesota** (www.elibrarymn.org) is a great place to start, with databases on the "Student Research" page and an "Ask a Librarian" form for questions.
- The Internet can **make your research trips to libraries more efficient!** Save valuable research time at the library by finding the library's available resources before you go.
- **Websites provide online access to primary sources.** Once you narrow your topic, check to see if there are any primary sources available online.
  - Try searching the key words of your topic along with "primary sources."

Caution!
- **Beware of questionable Internet sites.** Anyone can post information on the web. Information from the Library of Congress is more reliable than from "Jane the Civil War buff."
- **Only a small percentage of source material is available on the Internet.** Online research should be done in combination with more traditional historical research, not instead of it.
- **Books often offer a deeper level of analysis than websites.** Often students complain that they are finding the same information on each website they visit. Going offline can broaden your understanding of your topic.

PRIMARY & SECONDARY SOURCES

When historians study a topic, they try to gather a wide variety of sources during their research. Historians use sources like a lawyer uses evidence. Both need information to "make their case." But not all sources are the same. Historians classify their sources in two categories: **Primary** and **Secondary**. You are going to need to use both types of sources for a successful History Day project.

Secondary Sources

Secondary sources are usually published books or articles by an author who makes an argument about a topic based on primary sources. **The writer is not an eyewitness to, or a participant in, the historic event.** Most books, encyclopedias, and websites are secondary sources. Secondary sources provide important background information about your topic. The footnotes and bibliographies of secondary sources will also lead you to primary sources.

Examples of Secondary Sources:

- Biographies
- Encyclopedias
- History textbooks
- Media documentaries
- Books about the topic
- Interviews with scholars/experts
- Articles about the topic
- Websites

Primary Sources

Primary sources are materials **directly related to a topic by time or participation**. They provide a first-hand account about a person or an event because they were written or produced in the time period you are studying, are eyewitness accounts of historic events, are documents published at the time of specific historic events, or are later recollections by participants in historic events.

Examples of Primary Sources:

- Historic objects
- Manuscript collections
- Interviews with participants
- Autobiographies
- Government records
- Newspapers from the era
- Letters
- Photographs
- Music of the era
- Original film footage

STAYING ORGANIZED

Information is only valuable if you can record it and use it later. One of the best ways to organize your research is to use note cards. Use one set of cards to record **notes and quotes** that you find in your sources. Use another set of cards to record the information about your sources that you will need for your **annotated bibliography**. Here are two different examples of index cards for a bibliographic entry and research notes about a women's rights crusader from Minnesota named Clara Ueland.

Bibliography	Secondary Source	Book

Gilman, Rhoda R. <u>Northern Lights: The Story of Minnesota's Past</u>. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1989.

This book contained a profile of Clara Ueland and her efforts to win voting rights for women. It also described the history of the suffrage movement in Minnesota. Illustrations in this book included a picture of Clara Ueland, a suffrage poster, and a picture of women voting for the first time in 1920.

Important Pages: 171-175

Bibliography Cards track the sources you used. Fill these out as you use each source. It will make your life easier when you go to create your bibliography later.

Clara Ueland's early career and suffrage ideas	Gilman, P. 172

Clara Hampton Ueland taught school before she married Minneapolis lawyer Andreas Ueland. She started to work in the suffrage movement with other well-educated women.

"For years women had said that it was only fair for them to help to make the laws that they had to obey." (Gilman)

As president of the Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association in 1914, Clara Ueland declared that, "Mothers, from the beginning, have been the force that makes for better homes and higher civilization. This concern for home should be expressed in government." (Clara Ueland)

Note Cards track your notes, ideas, and quotes.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Successful research involves more than just finding all the information about a topic. You will never be able to find—or read—all of it. A narrow topic will keep your project to a manageable size. You can also use research questions to help focus your project event more.

Writing Research Questions

Good historical research questions allow you to investigate issues of cause and effect, change over time, differences in perspective, etc. What were the causes of past events? What were the effects? How did past decisions or actions affect future choices? What has changed?

- **Research questions are different than information-seeking questions.** Information-seeking questions help you understand the basic facts about your topic. When was the 19th amendment passed? Who was the first president of the United States? How does a bill become a law? You will likely answer these information-seeking questions just by reading an encyclopedia article.

WORSHEET: WRITING RESEARCH QUESTIONS		
Brainstorm a variety of questions about your topic. Try selecting the most interesting two or three questions to guide your research.		
Part of Project	**Sample: Rosa Parks**	**Your Topic**
Long Before ● What outside people, ideas or events were going on to influence your topic? ● What else does your viewer need to know to understand the background of your topic?	What was going on in the Civil Rights Movement at the time? How were African Americans treated?	
Right Before ● Who are the main players and what are they doing to prepare for the main events? ● What are the events leading up to the main event?	Who was Rosa Parks? Why did Rosa Parks refuse to give up her bus seat? What were leaders in Montgomery doing to prepare for this event?	
Main Event ● What happened?	How did the bus boycott begin? What happened?	
Right After ● What are some of the reactions to the main event? Include both positive and negative. ● What changed right away?	What changed right away in Montgomery because of the boycott? Did everyone agree on the boycott? How did people across the country hear about and react to it?	
Long After ● How are things different because of the topic? ● Did this topic influence other historical events? ● Why is this topic important in history?	How was the Montgomery Bus Boycott a turning point in the Civil Rights Movement? How did King become a national leader after this event?	

WORKSHEET: RESEARCH STRATEGY

Plan a strategy for your History Day research, including what to search for and where to look.

1. What are some important words, dates, or people related to your topic? These words will help you to search for sources. Remember to check spelling!

_____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____

2. What types of secondary sources might exist about your topic? Circle or check the types of sources you think you could find about your topic.

Book	Video Documentary	Encyclopedia	Interview with Scholar
History Textbook	Biography	Website	

3. What types of primary sources might exist about your topic? Circle or check the types of sources you think you could find about your topic.

Diary	Manuscript Collection	Government Records	Historic Objects or Sites
Interview with Participant	Autobiography	Photographs	Newspapers from the Time Period
Original Film Footage	Music of the Period	Letters	

4. Where can you go to find this information? Answer the following questions and think about the places you could look for sources.

	Tried it!	Doesn't work for my topic.
School Library—Name:	☐	☐
Public Library—Name:	☐	☐
College/University Library—Name:	☐	☐
History Textbook—Title:	☐	☐
Electronic Library of Minnesota (www.elibrarymn.org)		
Encyclopedia Britannica	☐	☐
Academic Search Premier	☐	☐
ProQuest	☐	☐
Student Resources in Context	☐	☐
Minnesota Historical Society		
MNopedia (www.mnopedia.org)	☐	☐
Library Guides (http://libguides.mnhs.org)	☐	☐
Minnesota History Magazine (www.mnhs.org/market/mhspress/minnesotahistory/)	☐	☐
Google		
Google Search	☐	☐
Targeted Search: "Primary Sources" or "History" plus your topic	☐	☐
Google Books (www.books.google.com)	☐	☐
Other idea:	☐	☐
Other idea:	☐	☐

WORKING ON YOUR OWN OR IN A GROUP

Working on Your Own
There are some advantages to taking your History Day journey on your own. Working alone is less complicated and presents fewer potential distractions than you might encounter in a group. There is no confusion over who is responsible for meeting deadlines. The success of your History Day project depends on you.

Working in a Group
Becoming part of a group also advantages. You and your fellow group members can share the work. Each member will bring a different set of skills and interests to the group. Your History Day journey will be one of compromise.

Be careful when choosing your group members. Remember, working with your best friend is not always the best idea. When selecting group members, ask yourself the following questions:
- What type of people do I like to work with?
- What skills will each group member bring to the project?
- What qualities make someone a good group member?
- What traits in people do I want to avoid when picking my partners?
- If you need to work outside of class, will you be able to get together?

WORKSHEET: CATEGORY AND GROUP CHOICES
Use this worksheet to explain your choices about category and working alone or in a group.

1. Which category do you want to select?

2. Why is this the best category for you and your topic?

3. Do you plan on working individually or in a group? (Circle one)   Individually   Group

4. Fill out the questions below for whichever group size that you plan on selecting for History Day.

Working Alone

A. What will be some of your responsibilities if you work alone?

B. Why is working alone the best choice for you?

Working in a Group

A. What will be some of the challenges you face when you work in a group?

B. Why is working in a group the best choice for you?

Now that you've done your research, it's time to figure out what it all means. You are going to make an argument about the significance of your topic in history. This argument is also called a thesis statement, and is the central focus of your entire History Day project!

Thesis Statements

Your thesis statement is the essential element of your History Day project. It will be the centerpiece of any project. It should be clearly included in your Website or Exhibit. Your thesis should be woven into the beginning and the end of your Performance or Documentary script. The thesis should make an appearance within the first two paragraphs of a research Paper.

You will decide what information you need to include in your project by using your thesis as a guide. Every part of your project will support your thesis

Writing a thesis can be hard work. You should go through several drafts. Don't expect it to be perfect the first time. The worksheet on the following page will give you a few ideas about how to get started.

Remember when we talked about **research questions**? They can also come in handy when writing your thesis statement. The answer to well-written research questions can form the basis for a good thesis statement. Check out the example below about the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

Research Questions	Sample Thesis
Why did Rosa Parks refuse to give up her seat on the bus? What other events were going on in the Civil Rights Movement? What impact did her actions have on the Civil Rights Movement?	The Montgomery Bus Boycott began in 1955, sparked by Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her bus seat to a white passenger. The year-long boycott and the Supreme Court victory brought national attention to segregation, demonstrating the power of nonviolent protest as an effective communication strategy for other civil rights protests.

Remember Your Theme Connection

As you develop your thesis statement, think about your theme connection. The strongest History Day projects will weave the central ideas of the theme into the thesis, and throughout each project section.

Try to include the ideas of communication and understanding in your thesis. Look for ways to include the theme words in your section heading or text. This will help to show the judges your theme connection.

Historical Context

Nothing in history happened in isolation. Every topic was influenced by people, ideas, or events that came before it. The impacts of every topic went on to influence other people, ideas, and events. This relationship of a topic to the environment surrounding it is called **historical context**.

Investigate your topic's historical context to get a full understanding of your topic.. The chart on page 13 gives you some guiding questions to help figure this out.

WORKSHEET: THESIS STATEMENTS

SAMPLE TOPIC: Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott

WHO: Who was involved? Who was affected? Rosa Parks, Citizens in Montgomery, Civil Rights Movement leaders, Montgomery's government officials

WHAT: What happened? Rosa Parks refused to give up her bus seat to a white passenger, which violated a law enforcing segregation on Montgomery city buses. She was arrested and went to jail. Civil rights leaders, including Martin Luther King, Jr., organized a boycott of buses and challenged the law as unconstitutional.

WHERE: Where was/were the place(s) it took place? Montgomery, Alabama

WHEN: When did it happen? How long of a time period was it? Rosa Parks was arrested on December 1, 1955. The boycott started on December 5 and lasted for 381 days.

WHY: Why did it happen? What caused it? Civil Rights Movement leaders wanted to overturn segregation laws. Rosa Parks attended training for non-violent protest at the Highlander Folk School.

WHY: Why is it important? What were the outcomes? The boycott forced change in Montgomery and succeeded in overturning the law requiring segregation on public transportation. This success inspired other Civil Rights Movement protests and helped Martin Luther King, Jr. develop nonviolent strategies to fight segregation.

THEME CONNECTION: Communication in History
Remember: Try to connect to the ideas of communication and understanding in your thesis statement!

- **What was the communication?** Parks and other residents sent the message that they would not tolerate segregation but prove that nonviolent protest was an effective method for creating change.
- **How did things change?** The boycott and Supreme Court victory showed the power of collective action and peaceful protest.

Put it all together into a thesis statement.

The Montgomery Bus Boycott began in 1955, sparked by Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her bus seat to a white passenger. The year-long boycott and the Supreme Court victory brought national attention to segregation, demonstrating the power of nonviolent protest as an effective communication strategy for other civil rights protests.

TOPIC:

WHO: Who was involved? Who was affected?

WHAT: What happened? What was the main event?

WHERE: Where was/were the place(s) it took place?

WHEN: When did it happen? How long of a time period was it?

WHY: Why did it happen? What caused it?

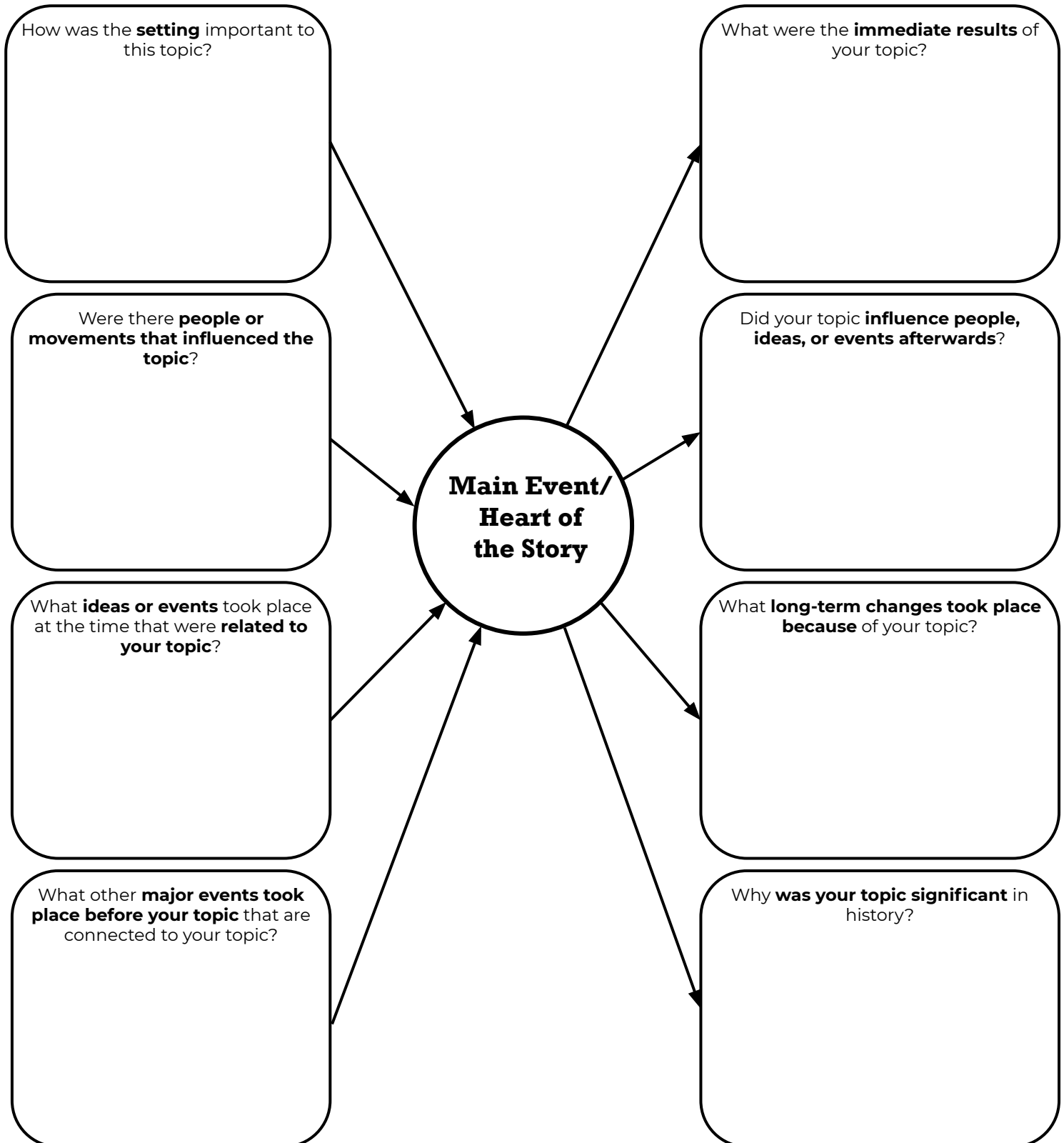**WHY:** Why is it important? What were outcomes?

THEME CONNECTION: Communication in History
Remember: Try to connect to the ideas of communication and understanding in your thesis statement!

- **What was the communication?**

- **How did things change?**

Put it all together into a thesis statement.

WORSHEET: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Historical context is how your topic influenced and was influenced by other people, events, and ideas. Consider what happened both before and after the main events of your topic.

How was the **setting** important to this topic?

What were the **immediate results** of your topic?

Were there **people or movements that influenced the topic**?

Did your topic **influence people, ideas, or events afterwards**?

Main Event/ Heart of the Story

What **ideas or events** took place at the time that were **related to your topic**?

What **long-term changes took place because** of your topic?

What other **major events took place before your topic** that are connected to your topic?

Why **was your topic significant** in history?

PART THREE   PRESENTATION

History Day has five different categories - or ways that you can share your information. Your teacher may let you choose from all of them - or may limit your choices. This guide will give you the basic rules and the ideas are only a starting point for your creativity!

- **PAPER**
- **EXHIBIT**
- **DOCUMENTARY**
- **PERFORMANCE**
- **WEBSITE**

Group vs. Individual Projects
Exhibits, Documentaries, Performances, and Websites may be created as individual or group entries. Ask your teachers for rules about how many members you can have in a group. The Paper category is only open to individual entries.

Choosing a Category
It is important to consider the following as you select your presentation category::
- Which category best fits your interests and skills (or the talents of group members)?
- Will you have access to the equipment or materials you need to present your entry? This is especially important for Documentaries and Websites!
- Does your research fit one category better than another? For example, do you have enough pictures and illustrations for a Documentary?

Once you have selected a category, try to look at examples created by other students. Go to https://www.mnhs.org/historyday and click on "Categories and sample projects" for examples. This may help give you ideas about the best way to present your topic. Keep in mind that these samples are finished products - and have gone through many revisions.

The History Day *Contest Rule Book* (UPDATED JUNE 2020)
Be sure to read the the *National History Day Contest Rule Book* for complete information on the rules for your presentation category. The *Contest Rule Book* also describes the judging criteria for History Day. You can download it from our website - https://www.mnhs.org/historyday. Click on "Categories and sample projects."
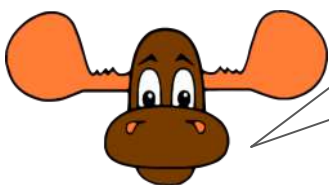
Download the new 2020 *Contest Rule Book* from our website!

If you are planning to compete in a Regional contest in 2021, pay attention important deadlines and submission guidelines based on the contest format (virtual or in-person).

CATEGORY OVERVIEW: EXHIBIT

Exhibits are visual representations of your research and analysis. They are easy to understand and attractive, similar to exhibits in a museum. To be successful, an Exhibit must create an effective balance between visual interest and historical explanation.

Basic Rules	Common Types of Exhibits

Basic Rules

Word Limit: 500 student composed words
There is a 500-student composed word limit that applies to all text created by the student that appears on or as part of an Exhibit.

This includes the text you write for titles, subtitles, captions, graphs, timelines, media devices (e.g., video or computer files), or other materials (e.g. photo albums, scrapbooks, etc.) where you use your own words.

Size Limit: 30" x 40" x 6'
The overall size of your Exhibit can be no larger than 40 inches wide, 30 inches deep, and six feet high.

Circular or rotating Exhibits or those meant to be viewed from all sides must be no more than 30 inches in diameter.

Media Limit: 2 minutes
If you use a media device, you are limited to two minutes total of audio or video.

Required: Citations and credits
You must give a brief credit for each visual on your board, these do not count towards your word limit.

Your project must follow all other category rules, and the General Rules for All Categories. [Read the Rulebook!](#)

View Sample Exhibits:
[www.mnhs.org/ historyday/categories/ sample-projects](#)

Common Types of Exhibits

Three-Panel Exhibit
The most common style of Exhibit entry is a three-panel display. This style is the least complicated to design and build, but is still a very effective way to present your information.
- The title will likely be the first thing the viewer looks at - It will likely be in the largest font size and near the top of your project.
- The thesis should be clear on your project itself. The center panel of an Exhibit is a great place to showcase this!
- Think carefully about the organization of your Exhibit. Use different font sizes and colors to help direct the viewer's' eye around the project. On right: A typical example of Exhibit layout.
- The area in front of your project, on the table between the side panels, can also be used as part of your Exhibit. Make sure any materials you put here relate directly to your Exhibit..
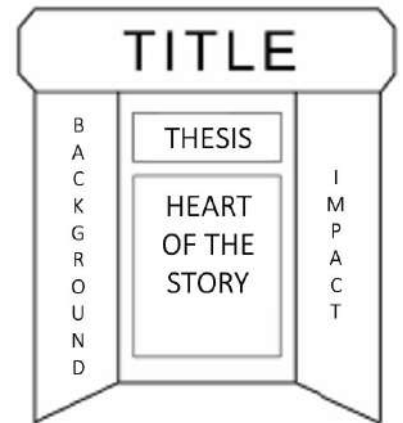
Three-Dimensional Exhibit
A three-dimensional Exhibit is more complicated to construct but can be visually effective depending on your topic choice. Like the three-panel display, one side should contain your title and thesis statement

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. Be sure to design your 3D exhibit so people know where to begin reading.
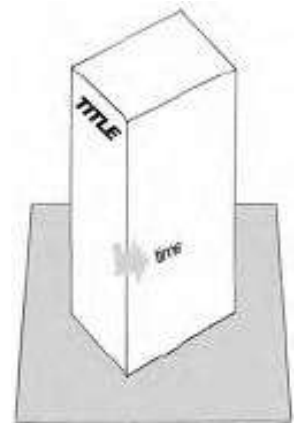
Tips for Creating an Exhibit

An Exhibit Should Be Self-Explanatory
The judges shouldn't need to depend on your interview to understand your argument. All the information they need should be in the project itself. Your text, illustrations, and written materials should be easy to understand and to follow.

Avoid Clutter
It is tempting to try to get as much onto your Exhibit as possible. Try to select only the most important items - that directly support your thesis - for your Exhibit.

Plan it Out in Advance
Figure out what you want in each section *before* you put your exhibit together.
- What information do you want to include in each section? Each section should be labeled to direct the viewer's eye around the Exhibit.
- How does each section support your thesis?
- What supporting evidence do you need - illustrations, quotes, etc. - to support the text you are writing?

PLANNING YOUR EXHIBIT

Each section of your Exhibit will support your thesis. Plan out what ideas you want to include in each section. Be sure to come up with creative titles for each section on your Exhibit.

PROJECT TITLE

Background

Put your topic into historical context.

- What was taking place before or at the same time as your topic that influenced it?
- What outside people, ideas, or events were going on to influence your topic?
- What other information does your viewer need to know to understand the background of your topic?

Build-Up

Give more specific information related to your topic than the "background" section. You can also think of this as "the spark" that set the main event into action.

- Who are the main players and what are they doing for the main events of your topic?
- What are the events leading up to the main event(s)?
- What was life like before the main event(s) of your topic?

THESIS

Heart of the Story

The "Heart of the Story" or "Main Events" describe the key details of your topic.

- Give the major details about the main event(s) in your topic. What actually happened?
- Include specific details about the most critical people and events related to your topic.
- This section generally covers a smaller time period (several months to several years).

Short-Term Impact

Focus on what happened shortly after the main events of your topic.

- What are some of the reactions to the main event, shortly after it happened? Be sure to consider both positive and negative reactions.
- Did anything change right away? New laws? New ways of thinking?
- Who was affected by the event?
- Were there intended/ unintended consequences?

Long-Term Impact

Take a step back and think about the historical significance of your topic. Be sure to connect this back to your thesis!

- How are things different because of your topic?
- What is the long-term significance?
- Did your topic influence other historical events?
- Why is this topic important in history?

Theme Connection: There is no requirement for where you should discuss **"Communication in History: The Key to Understanding"** in your project You should try to work these ideas *into* your project in the sections where it makes the most sense, based on your theme connection and thesis statement.

CATEGORY OVERVIEW: WEBSITE

The Website category allows you to create an interactive, educational Website. The key to the Website category is a strong historical argument and evidence supported by clear organization, simple navigation tools, and interactivity without glitz.

Basic Rules

Created with NHD WebCentral
Your entry must be constructed using NHD Web Central editor..

100 MB Size Limit, No Outside Links:
The site can be no larger than 100 MB. You cannot link to any outside websites.

Word Limit: No more than 1,200 visible, student-composed words
Text that you write, including captions, graphs, etc. will count toward your limit. Look at the Rulebook for guidance on how to count words.

Media Limit: 3 Minutes
Audio/visual clips must add up to no more than 3 minutes.

Required: Homepage
The NHD Rulebook lists what you must list on the homepage.

Required: Citations, credits
Each visual on your website must have a brief credit; this does not count towards your word limit.

Required: Written Material
You must include your annotated bibliography and process paper on your Website in PDF format.

Your project must follow all other category rules, and the General Rules for All Categories. Read the Rulebook!

View Sample Websites:
www.mnhs.org/historyday/categories/sample-projects

NHD Web Central

You **must** build your Website using NHD Web Central, a free, online web-building tool. More information is available on our website: www.mnhs.org/historyday/categories

You can save and edit your site throughout the year, though you will be locked out of editing your project while judging is taking place. At the end of the school year, you will have the option to keep your site before is it cleared from the system on September 1 (for a small fee).

What is a History Day Website?

With a Website, you will create a collection of interconnected pages that use multimedia to communicate a historical argument, research, and interpretation of your topic's significance in history. Your Website will contain:

- **Homepage & Thesis:** Required by History Day, the homepage includes important information. The homepage is a great place to include a thesis!
- **Supporting Pages & Navigation**: You will divide your information into supporting pages - and interconnect them with your navigational menu.
- **Student-Composed Text:** Your text will support your thesis. You will discuss what happened before, during, and after the main events of your topic.
- **Images and Multimedia:** These types of information will provide important evidence for your text and thesis. Choose carefully! You have limited space and time - and more importantly, too much can be overwhelming!
- **Quotes:** Quotes from primary sources - such as documents or from participants - can be another great type of evidence (and don't count toward your word limit).

Planning Your Website

Research and Plan Your Website First
It may be tempting to begin your project on NHDWebCentral, but actually building your Website is one of the final steps in your process.

1. Do your research
2. Develop a thesis
3. Plan your Website out on paper
   a. What pages do you need?
   b. What will you discuss on each page?
   c. How will the pages be connected?
4. Write your text: Write this in a word processing program - and not directly into the website creator!
5. Select supporting evidence: What images, media, or quotes will help to prove the text you have written and your thesis?
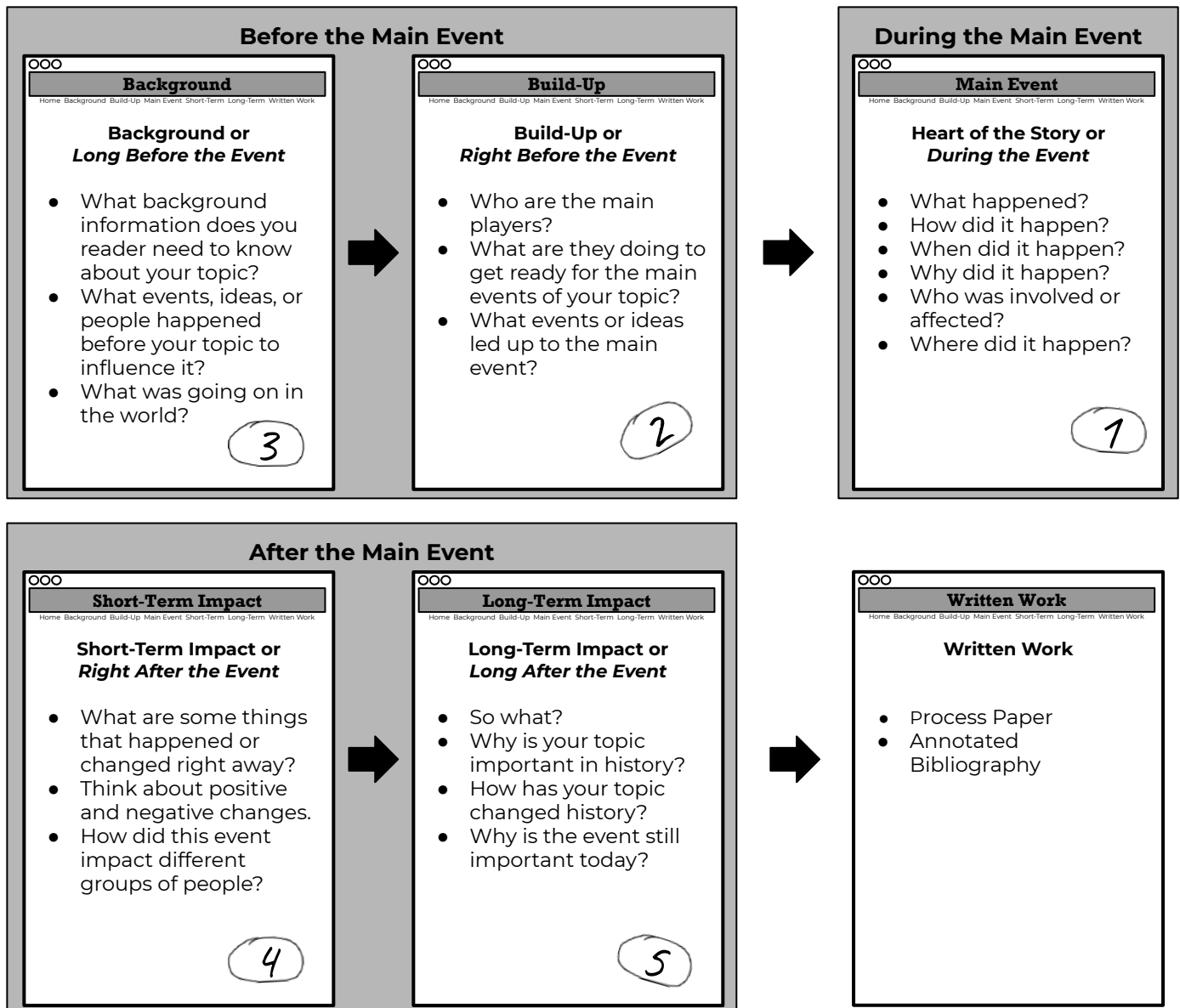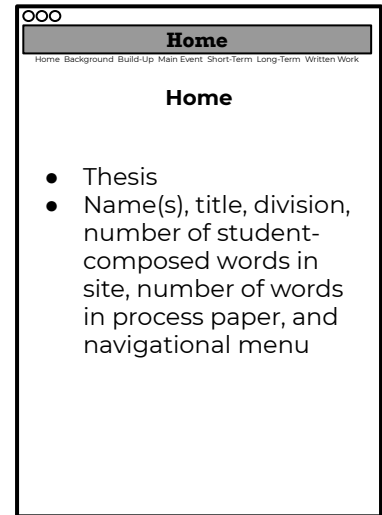
PLANNING YOUR WEBSITE

Your Website will be a set of interconnected pages that support your thesis. You should carefully select the content that goes on each of these pages - and plan this out before using NHD Web Central.

The following pages, which are the basics you of your topic. You may end up adding more pages, but start with the basics first.

Directions: Use your thesis to decide which major ideas you want to include on each page. **Your viewer will read the pages in chronological order, but it's easier to plan out your pages in the following steps.**

- **Step 1**: Start with the Heart of the Story and describe what happened..
- **Step 2**: Next, think about what happened right before the event. What sparked the main events of your topic?
- **Step 3:** Set your topic into larger historical context. What background information does your reader need to know?
- **Step 4:** In this step, think about what happened *right after* the main event - the short-term impact.
- **Step 5**: Lastly, think about the legacy, or long-term impact of your topic.

Home

- Thesis
- Name(s), title, division, number of student-composed words in site, number of words in process paper, and navigational menu

Before the Main Event

Background or *Long Before the Event*

- What background information does you reader need to know about your topic?
- What events, ideas, or people happened before your topic to influence it?
- What was going on in the world?

3

Build-Up or *Right Before the Event*

- Who are the main players?
- What are they doing to get ready for the main events of your topic?
- What events or ideas led up to the main event?

2

During the Main Event

Heart of the Story or *During the Event*

- What happened?
- How did it happen?
- When did it happen?
- Why did it happen?
- Who was involved or affected?
- Where did it happen?

1

After the Main Event

Short-Term Impact or *Right After the Event*

- What are some things that happened or changed right away?
- Think about positive and negative changes.
- How did this event impact different groups of people?

4

Long-Term Impact or *Long After the Event*

- So what?
- Why is your topic important in history?
- How has your topic changed history?
- Why is the event still important today?

5

Written Work

- Process Paper
- Annotated Bibliography

CREDITS FOR WEBSITES AND EXHIBITS

Students must include a brief credit, on the Exhibit itself or in the Website, for all visual sources (e.g. photographs, paintings, charts, graphs, etc.). They must also fully cite these sources in their annotated bibliography.

- A credit is much briefer than a full citation. For example: The credit below includes the organization where this picture can be found (Library of Congress), but does NOT include the details that are part of the bibliographic citation.
- Students may consider including these credits in a smaller font, below the image on the Exhibit or near the image on a website, similar to how a credit appears in a book.
- These brief credits do NOT count toward the student-composed word count.

*A brief, factual **credit** is required and does not count toward the 500-word limit.*

Consider including your credit in a smaller font either below or along the side of the image.

"Bring U.S. Together," 1972, Library of Congress

U.S. Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm ran for president in the 1972 Democratic party primary but was blocked from participating in televised debates.

*A student-written **caption** does count toward the 500 word limit.*

A caption is not required, but is sometimes a good idea to help show how the image supports your argument.

EVALUATING PROJECTS

At all levels of History Day competitions, judges are looking at the following criteria, which heavily focuses on the history behind your project.

- **80% Historical Quality**: Historical argument, wide research, uses available primary sources, historical context, multiple perspectives, historical accuracy, demonstrates significance of topic in history, original student voice, and connection to theme.
- **20% Clarity of Presentation**: Uses the category effectively to clearly explain ideas.
- **Rules Compliance**: Project follows general guidelines for History Day as well as category-specific rules.

CATEGORY OVERVIEW: DOCUMENTARY

A Documentary is an audio/visual presentation that uses multiple source types such as images, video, adn sound to communication your historical argument, research, and interpretation of your topic's significance in history. It is similar to a documentary ou may have seen on PBS or the History Channel.

Basic Rules

Time Limit: No longer than 10 minutes
Timing begins with the first visual (text or image) on the screen or sound is heard. Timing ends at the conclusion of the last visual (text or image) or last sound ends. Source credits must be included in the total time limit.

Project Runs on Its Own
Once the documentary begins, it must run on its own. Judge or audience interaction is not allowed.

Created by YOU
You (and group members, if working in a group) must create and produce your documentary. If you are recording your own footage, only you (or group members) may appear on screen, with the exception of any interview subjects.

Required: Source credits at end of documentary
The last portion of your documentary must be a brief list of credits for sources. They should be readable - but **not** the full bibliographic citation.

Your project must follow all other category rules, and the General Rules for All Categories. [Read the Rulebook!](#)

View Sample Documentaries:
www.mnhs.org/historyday/categories/sample-projects

Documentary Technology

Video Presentations
The availability of video editing computer software has made this type of documentary the most popular option. There are two ways you may access this technology:
- **On a computer or device:** Apple's iMovie or Windows MovieMaker may already be a part of your computer/device. Other software, such as Final Cut Pro or Adobe Premiere, may be used, but are more expensive.
  - If you are creating your documentary using one of these programs, you will need to use the same computer each time, as the files are saved to the device.
- **Web-Based:** Your school may have a subscription to web-based editing software, such as WeVideo. Talk to your teacher!
  - If you are using a web-based program, your files are saved to the cloud. You can work on a variety of different computers/devices - or have group members working in different places.

Computer Slideshow Presentations
Slideshow software, such as PowerPoint, is a low-tech way to combine the audio and visual parts of a documentary. You can load the images into the slides, record the matching audio, and set the presentation to automatically advance.
- These types of presentations are becoming less and less common. If you are competing, be sure to read the event materials on how to prepare your project if making a slideshow.
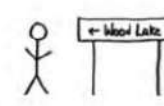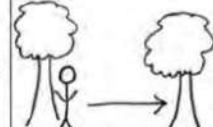
Planning Your Documentary

Storyboards
A storyboard is a great tool that helps you combine the audio and visual elements of your project. It will also save you time when you go to create your documentary.

Make a storyboard form by creating a three-column table similar to the one shown on the right. Label the columns Notes, Visual, and Audio. Use the Visual and Audio columns to match your text/narration with the images you intend to use to support your points. Use the Notes column to add any information about the section that will help you during the production stage.

THE DOCUMENTARY Tootsie ROLL

Think about dividing up the ten minutes in your documentary into smaller sections, like a Tootsie Roll. The following organizer gives you an idea of how you can divide this time - to make sure you talk about what happened before, during and after the main events of your topic.

Introduction & Thesis
(1 minute)

- General introduction to documentary
- Incorporate thesis and theme words
- Don't have to label as "thesis" or put on screen in text.
- Remember its the road map to your project.

Background/Buildup
(2 min., 30 sec.)

- Place your topic in historical context.
- What information do we need to know to understand your topic?
- What outside people, ideas, or events influenced your topic?
- Who are the main players?
- What events lead up to the main event?

Main Event/ Heart of the Story
(2 min. 30 sec.)

- Major details about the main events in your topic
- Include specific details about the most critical people and events related to your topic.
- This section generally covers a smaller time period (several months to several years).

Title
(15 sec.)

Short and Long-Term Impact
(2 min. 30 sec.)

- What are some of the immediate reactions to the main event, shortly after it happened?
- What changed? New laws? New ways of thinking?
- Who as affected by the event?
- How was the world different after the main events of your topic?
- What is the long term significance?
- Were there intended/unintended consequences?
- Did it influence other historical events?

Conclusion
(1 minute)

- Restate your thesis and theme connection.
- Focus on the main points you want your audience to take away.
- Why is this topic important in history?

End Titles, Source Credits
(15 sec.)

- Briefly list the main sources of audio and visual material
- Thank people, organizations and libraries who helped or contributed to your project

Audio Track 1: Student-read narration and oral history interviews

Audio Track 2: Historically appropriate music and sound (optional)

CATEGORY OVERVIEW: PERFORMANCE

The Performance category allows you to create a historical argument using acting. This will be a dramatic portrayal of your topic's significance in history. Entries must have dramatic appeal but not at the expense of historical information.

Basic Rules

Time Limit: No longer than 10 minutes
Timing begins from the first word or action following the introduction of your Performance.

Performed Live
Performances should be performed live. You may not submit a recorded Performance in this category, or in the Documentary category.

Created by YOU
Your Performance must be an original production - created by you (and your group members, if working in a group). You may not perform a script written by someone else.

Media is Okay
You can use technology within your Performance, but you (or your group members, if working in a group) must provide and run all equipment.

Forbidden: Audience Participation
You are not allowed to have the audience participate in your Performance (but it's okay if they laugh or cry!)

Your project must follow all other category rules, and the General Rules for All Categories. [Read the Rulebook!](#)

View Sample Performances:
www.mnhs.org/historyday/categories/sample-projects

Elements of a Performance

There is no formula for a History Day Performance. They come in many different formats. There are a few things, however, that are consistent across projects:

Script
You will write your own script, which is usually 4-5 double- spaced pages. Be sure to include your thesis in your script!

Characters
Select one or more characters for your Performance. These could be actual historical figures or fictional, based on your research.

Scenes
You may have one or more scenes for your characters. Your script and props will help identify the scene for your audience.

Props and Set
Props can be part of the set - or things used by characters - to help tell the story. This may include objects, historical documents, furniture or the set (such as a backdrop). Keep it simple! Make sure each prop has a purpose and can be easily set-up and taken down.

Costumes
Pick an appropriate or neutral costume for your characters. Keep it simple! Fancy costumes can take a long time to change.

Planning Your Performance

1. Research Comes First
Don't jump right in and start writing a script. Do your research first. This is the foundation for your entire project!

2. Develop a Thesis
Even in the Performance category, you still need a thesis that explains why your topic is important in history. Write your thesis before you start planning your script.

3. Brainstorm Scenarios and Characters
Use your thesis to figure out which characters and scenes will best help you to share this with your viewers. Be creative! Consider not just the major players in your topic. What people were connected to this topic that might provide an interesting point of view on the issue?
- **Remember:** Avoid presenting an oral report on a character that begins with when they were born and ends with when they died. This point of view is limited - and often prevents you from discussing the significance of the topic in history.

4. Write the Script
The average script for a Performance is 4-5 double-spaced pages.
- Make sure your thesis is clear in your Performance, ideally incorporated into the beginning and ending of your Performance.
- Your script should include references to the historical evidence, particularly the primary source material you found in your research. Using actual dialogue, quotations, or taking excerpts from speeches will add historical detail.

PLANNING YOUR PERFORMANCE

Performances are the most creative History Day category. It's impossible to give you a formula for a Performance. They can take many different formats and will vary based on the number of people, characters, scenarios, and topic. Below are two tools to help you begin brainstorming your Performance. Keep in mind that these are not the only successful approaches to the Performance category—just a place to get started. Be creative!

DRAFTING YOUR SCRIPT

What	Key Questions and Elements
Intro (1 minute)	• Set the scene. Who are you? When is this taking place? Where are you? • Introduce your thesis
Historical Context/ Background (2 minutes)	• What happened before your topic to influence it? • Were there other movements, people, or ideas that influenced it? • What events led up to the topic?
Heart of Story (3 minutes)	• Key events and issues related to your topic
Short and Long-Term Impact (3 minutes)	• What were the immediate outcomes of your topic? • What has been the long-term significance of your topic in history?
Conclusion/ Wrap-Up (1 minute)	• Reinforce your thesis. • Conclude your character's actions.

SCENARIO BRAINSTORM

Brainstorm at least two **different** scenarios, using **different** characters in each. Which one is the best approach for presenting your ideas?

Scenario #1

Character(s) (historical figures, composite characters, narrators):

Setting:

Timeframe:

Describe What Happens:

Scenario #2

Character(s) (historical figures, composite characters, narrators):

Setting:

Timeframe:

Describe What Happens:

What Would Your Characters Know?

When selecting characters for your Performance, it's important to think about what they would or wouldn't know. If your character is Abraham Lincoln, it's impossible for him to know what happened in 1870 because he was assassinated in 1865. Try selecting a different character—maybe someone who wasn't a major player. This could give you the chance to take a step back and discuss your topic's significance in history in a different way. Instead of Abraham Lincoln, consider being one of his advisors or aides who lived after his death. This would give you a more long-term perspective on Lincoln's presidency.

CATEGORY OVERVIEW: PAPER

A Paper is a written format for presenting your historical argument, research, and interpretation of your topic's significance in history.

Basic Rules

Length: 1,500 - 2,500 total words
Each word or number in the text of the paper counts as one word. Unlike Exhibits or Websites - **ALL WORDS in the body of the paper will count towards the word count, both student-composed and quoted words**.

The title page, process paper, citations, and annotated bibliography do NOT count toward your word limit. The paper itself will usually end up being about 6-10 double-spaced pages.

Individuals Only
Only individual papers are allowed in History Day. You may not create a group paper.

Required: Citations
Citations should credit the sources of specific ideas and direct quotes. You should use footnotes, endnotes or internal documentation.

Optional: Appendices
If you want to include relevant images, maps, graphs or primary sources, they should be in an appendix.

Your project must follow all other category rules, and the General Rules for All Categories. Read the Rulebook!

View Sample Papers:
www.mnhs.org/ historyday/categories/ sample-projects

Picking the Research Paper Category

The Paper category is a familiar way to present information. You have probably written a paper. Before you choose a Paper, make sure it's a good fit for you and your topic! This category is great for students who:

Want to work alone. You are responsible for all aspects of your project - there is no such thing as a group paper!

Enjoy writing. While there is writing in each History Day category, Papers rely only on the written word to explain an argument.

Have a topic that fits with the category. You won't be able to use much visual or any media evidence in this category. For example: A Paper may not be the most exciting choice for a project on a music history topic.

The Mechanics of a Research Paper

Citations are probably the biggest difference between a History Day Research Paper and a paper you may have written previously. Citations are used to credit the sources of specific ideas as well as direct quotes in your Paper. You can use footnotes, endnotes, or internal documentation for your citations. **While all three are allowed, we suggest using footnotes, as these are most common in historical works**.

Superscript numbers in the body of your paper will direct readers to citations at the bottom of the page - the footnote.

What is a footnote?
Footnotes are explanations provided by writers about ideas or quotations presented in the Paper that are not their own. Footnotes not only give credit to the sources of ideas, but also serve as "evidence" in support of your ideas.

Usually footnotes occur in three situations:
1. **Quoting a Primary Source:** An example of this would be including a selection from a speech or interview.
2. **Quoting a Secondary Source:** If you take a direct quotation from someone's book, you must footnote it.
3. **Paraphrasing a Secondary Source:** Even if you change an author's ideas into your own words, you must footnote where you found this information.

PROCESS PAPER & ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Students in all categories must create and submit additional supporting materials with their projects. All categories must submit one annotated bibliography and one process paper for the entry.

Title Page
The title page includes the following information. Do not include any additional information or illustrations on the title page.
- Title of the entry
- Name(s) of the student(s) who developed the entry
- Age division and category of the entry
- Word count for each category:
    - **Exhibit**: The student-composed word count for the Exhibit and the total word count in the process paper.
    - **Documentary and Performance:** The total word count in the process paper
    - **Paper**: The total word counts for the Paper and process paper
    - **Website**: This information will be on the homepage of your Website. Include the student-composed word count for Website, the total length of all multimedia, and the word count of the process paper.

It is important to come up with a good title for your entry. A good title will quickly introduce your topic, but also adds wording that helps the viewer understand your point of view.

"Title"	**"Title"**	**"Title"**	**"Title"**
Name Junior Division Historical Paper Paper Length: 2,234 words Process Paper: 426 words	Names Junior Division Group Exhibit Student-composed Words: 489 Process Paper: 410 words	Name Senior Division Individual Performance Process Paper: 425 words	Name Senior Division Individual Documentary Process Paper: 410 words

Process Paper
Students competing **in any category** must also write a process paper. The process paper is not a summary of the topic, but an essay that describes the process of how the you developed the entry. Quotes, images or captions are not allowed in the process paper. The process paper is no longer than 500 words, usually 4-5 paragraphs addressing:

- How did you choose your topic and how does it relate to the annual theme?
- How did you conduct your research?
- How did you create your project?
- What is your historical argument?
- In what ways is your topic significant in history?

Annotated Bibliography
A bibliography is an alphabetized list of the sources used in developing a historical project. An annotated bibliography not only lists the sources, but also gives a 1-3 sentence description of each source and how you used it in your entry. A History Day bibliography should be separated into primary and secondary sources. For guidelines on bibliographic style refer to *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* by Kate L. Turabian or the Modern Language Association of America (MLA) style guide.