national history day MN

INTRODUCING NATIONAL HISTORY DAY 2023

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

_____

Your name here!

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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National History Day in Minnesota is a partnership of the Minnesota Historical Society at the University of Minnesota, College of Liberal Arts.

Major funding provided by:

The Fred C. and Catherine B. Andersen Foundation, the Ralph and Virginia Kurtzman Fund, the State of Minnesota/Arts and Culture Heritage Funds, the Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation, Frank W. Veden Charitable Trust, and the WEM Foundation.

Project dollars for National History Day in Minnesota are provided in part by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund, from the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment, through partnership with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

Questions

More information about National History Day in Minnesota for students, parents, and teachers is available on our website. Contact us anytime! https://www.mnhs.org/historyday

PART ONE RESEARCH

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.

2023: Frontiers in History: People, Places, Ideas

Many topics could be considered - and have been described by historians as - a frontier in history. It's up to you to make the case for your topic by identifying or defining the frontier and thinking about what came before and after it. The word frontier has many meanings, but historians have used the term in two broad ways: a geographical boundary or the limit of something. This could be the limit of what is known about a particular subject, or possible in terms of achievement, or what is accepted as status quo in society.

What interests you?

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

Some topics about geographic boundaries need special attention.

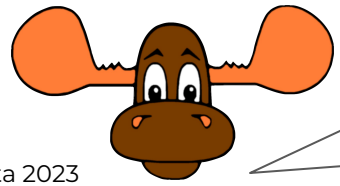
Topics about frontiers that may have been on the edge of European settlement likely involve indigenous people and groups who already inhabited the space.

In American history, the word "frontier" has famously been linked to the myth of the American West, the belief that the physical space at the edge of western settlement was uninhabited wilderness. Frontier is a problematic term in this context as it erases Indigenous peoples who inhabited those lands from history.

However, this does not mean that you cannot choose a topic involving history that unfolded in the American West. You just need to proceed with caution and consider multiple perspectives. Ask yourself these three questions: how did all groups experience the situation, how did power dynamics play a role, and how were people impacted differently.

Have you considered different points of view? Your research and project should consider a **variety of perspectives of those involved with or impacted by the topic.** An advancement or push on one side will meet resistance or pull on the other. While it is impossible to think about every individual person's point of view, find out more about those individuals or groups with different perspectives, and those who did and did not hold power or influence in the situation.

What changed? For every History Day project, you need a historical argument, or **thesis**. The **impact of your topic** can be positive, negative, or a mixture of both. It can have local, national, or international effects. What happened in the short *and* long - term? Was the impact felt equally by all?



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

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 can be 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

Being part of a group also has 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 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 working outside of class, will you be able to get together?
- Are you all interested in the same topics? Do you want to do the same project category?

WORKSHEET: Individual/Group & Category/Topic Interest

Use this worksheet to consider your initial category/topic interest, and working alone or in a group.

1. What type(s) of topics are you interested in?

2. Which of the following categories are you interested in? (Circle all that apply)

Paper **Exhibit** **Documentary** **Website** **Performance**

3. Why would this be the best category for you and your topic interests?

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

5. Answer the questions below for whichever group size you plan on selecting for History Day.

<u>Working Alone</u>

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

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

<u>Working in a Group</u>

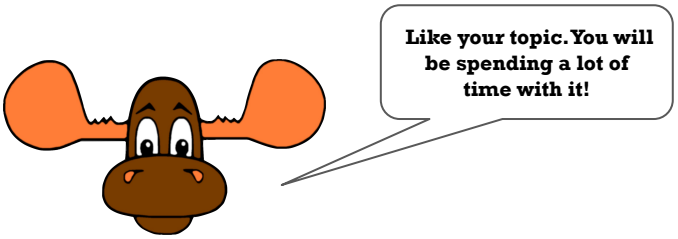
A. What will be some of the challenges you face when you work in a group?

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

SELECTING A TOPIC

The combination of a strong topic with plenty of 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 connect to the History Day theme. You may need to do some research to figure out this connection.
- **You are interested in this topic**. You will spend a lot of time researching your topic. If this is a topic you and the group are genuinely interested in, you will enjoy more of the research.
- **There is research out there about the topic**. Do a basic search to figure out if there are plenty primary and secondary sources connected to your topic. If not, consider another topic.
- **Your topic has significance**. You will need to 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 prove how the topic changed history. Even local topics have an impact on history.
- **Your topic is historic**. If your topic is too recent, you’re going to have a hard time finding the topic’s long-term significance in history. Select a topic that took place at least 20 years in the past.



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 a textbook or something related to your family’s history. Using the chart below, brainstorm one topic in each category that fits this year’s theme.

Politics

Topic Idea:

The Environment

Topic Idea:

Civil Rights

Topic Idea:

Social Issues

Topic Idea:

Military History

Topic Idea:

Religion

Topic Idea:

Science & Technology

Topic Idea:

Education

Topic Idea:

Business

Topic Idea:

Arts, Music, & Culture

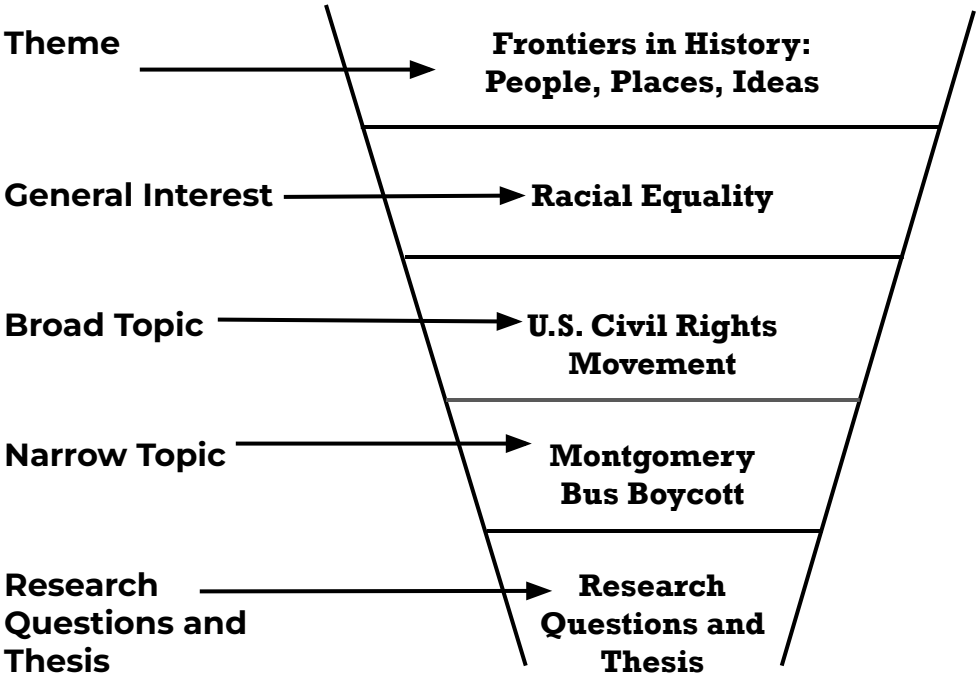
Topic Idea:

NARROWING YOUR TOPIC

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

Consider this example. Your group is interested in **racial equality movements**, but this general interest needs to be narrowed down. You decide to research "**U.S. Civil Rights Movement.**" However, even *this* topic is still too broad. The first step to narrowing it down is defining the "where" and "when" for your project.

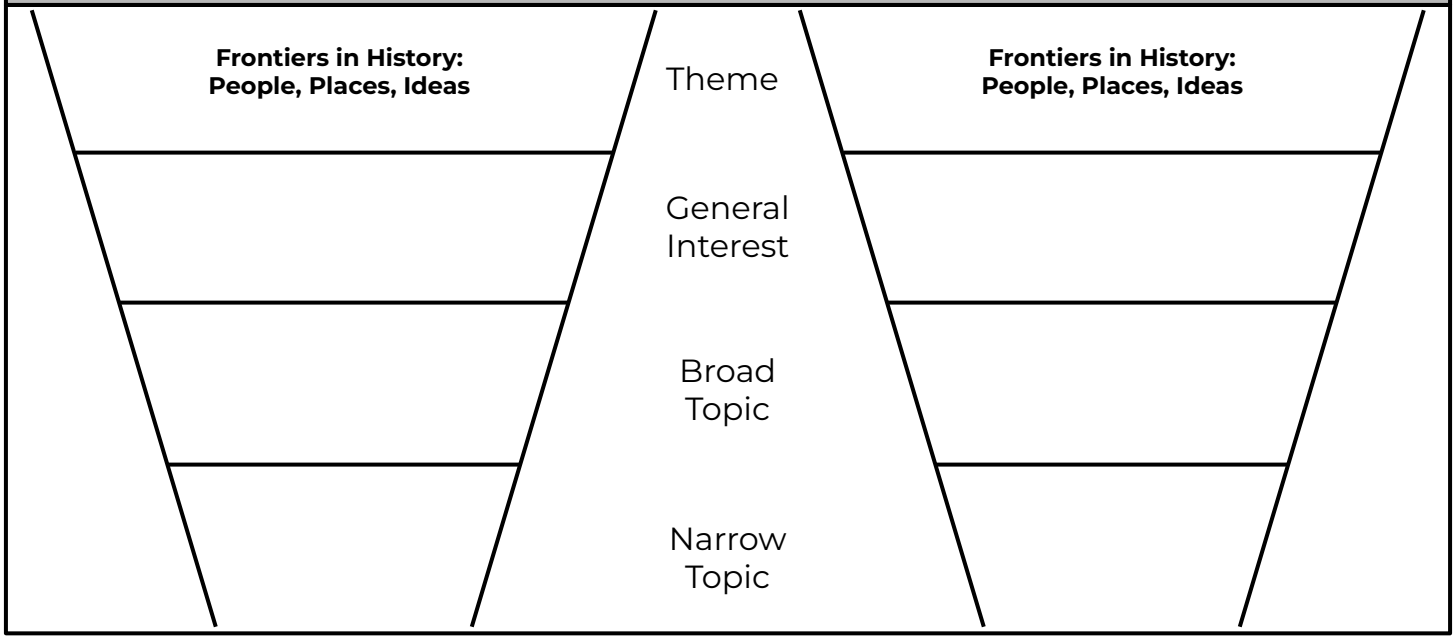
Your group should decide to focus on one big action or protest that happened during the movement. For example, the **Montgomery Bus Boycott** helped start the movement and would be a great, narrow topic to focus on for History Day!



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

WORKSHEET: TOPIC FUNNEL

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



FINDING INFORMATION

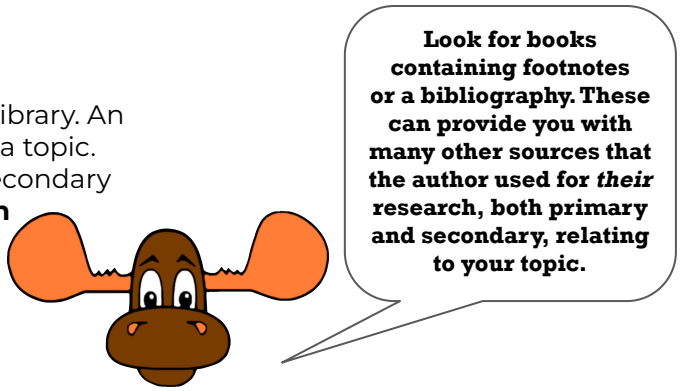
Research Strategy

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 or the Internet.**



How can I find more sources?

Once you have collected the basic information on your topic, try to locate some unique sources. Look 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 may 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, 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! **You can also find pre-recorded interviews online!*
- **Talk To a Librarian:** One of the best resources for finding information on your topic is asking a librarian or media specialist. They are professional information gatherers!

Using the Internet for History Day Research

The Internet is an extraordinary tool 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, and 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 checking the library's website for 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." Ex. Montgomery Bus Boycott 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.** Whenever possible, 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 say that they are finding the same information on each website they visit. Books have more in depth information that can broaden your understanding of your topic and numerous books are available online!

PRIMARY & SECONDARY SOURCES

When historians study a topic, they try to gather a wide variety of sources during their research. They use sources like a lawyer would use evidence. Both need information to "make their case," but not all sources are the same. Historians classify their sources into 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 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 can 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 ways to organize your research is to use a table. There are other ideas and more detailed examples in the ***Student Research Workbook*.**

Task: Copy key information from and take notes on each source you use. Gather facts, quotes, and information for your bibliography.

Tip: To help you organize your notes, highlight each source in a different color for the section of your project it fits best in (example: blue for background, green for build-up, yellow for main event, and so on).

Citation Add the MLA or Chicago citation. Use a generator like Citation Machine or BibMe to help you.	**Type** Primary or Secondary	**Key Quotes or Info** Copy key quotes or pieces of information from your source. Write down the page number of the quote, if there is one.	**Paraphrased Notes** Summarize the information from the source IN YOUR OWN WORDS.
EXAMPLE: Kenney, Dave. *Northern Lights: The Story of Minnesota's Past*. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2013.	Secondary	"By 1900, they could vote only in local elections for members of the school and library boards." (p. 265) "Opponents argued that women were homemakers." (p. 265) "Each time the Minnesota legislature met, women brought up suffrage." (p. 265)	Women had the right to vote in local elections, but not in state or national ones. Opponents of women's suffrage believed women should take care of homes and children and stay out of politics. Activists pressured Minnesota lawmakers to pass women's suffrage every session.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

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

Writing Research Questions

Research questions dig deeper into understanding not just what happened, but why it happened, how it was connected to other ideas or issues, and how it changed history. You can learn more about research questions and how to write them on our website.

Before writing research questions, you will need to do some pre-research. The answers to these fact-finding questions will give you the basic information about your topic. You can't write research questions until you have done your pre-research.

WORKSHEET: WRITING RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Part of Project	Sample: Rosa Parks	Your Topic
Long Before • What issues or problems were the main players involved with your topic trying to change and why?	What influence did the Civil Rights Movement have on activists in Montgomery before the bus boycott?	
Right Before • What inspired or sparked the main players of your topic to take action and why? • How was this topic a continuation of larger issues, trends, or movements that came before it?	What inspired Rosa Parks and other leaders in the Civil Rights movement to fight for change in Montgomery?	
Main Event • Who supported it and why? • Who did not support it and why? • How was this event different from or similar to other things taking place at the time, or approaches others had taken?	How were the events that took place in Montgomery different from or similar to other protests for civil rights?	
Right After • So what? How did this topic change history? • How was this topic a turning point in a larger issue, trend, or movement? • How were the impacts of this topic felt differently by those involved or impacted?	How did the Montgomery Bus Boycott change opinions about the Civil Rights Movement in the United States?	
Long After • How did this topic inspire future movements, events, or changes? • How has our understanding of the topic changed over time?	What impact did the strategies that were used in Montgomery have on the movement?	

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 terms will help you to search for sources. Remember to check spelling!

_____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____

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

Book	Scholarly Article	Video Documentary	Encyclopedia
History Textbook	Biography	Website	Interview with a Scholar

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

Diary	Manuscript Collection	Government Records	Historic Objects or Sites
Historic Newspapers	Autobiography	Photographs	Interview with a Participant
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	☐	☐
Gale 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)	☐	☐
Google Scholar (www.scholar.google.com)	☐	☐
Other idea:	☐	☐
Other idea:	☐	☐

PART TWO ANALYSIS

Now that you've done your research, it's time to figure out what it all means. You will need 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 an essential element of your History Day project. It is the centerpiece of every project. It should be clearly stated in your Website, Exhibit, or Paper, or woven into the beginning and the end of your Performance or Documentary script.

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

Writing a thesis can be hard work. Don't expect it to be perfect the first time; you should go through several drafts. 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 answers 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?	Rosa Parks was arrested in 1955 for refusing to give up her bus seat to a white passenger. This nonviolent protest aimed to expand the frontier of racial equality. Black citizens in Montgomery organized a year-long bus boycott, ending when the Supreme Court declared bus segregation unconstitutional, leading to other Civil Rights Movement victories.

Remember The Theme Connection

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

Make sure to include your frontier clearly in your thesis. Look for ways to include the other theme words in your section headings and text as well. This will help to show the judges a strong 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? What was the main event? 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. and others develop nonviolent strategies to fight segregation.

THEME CONNECTION: Frontiers in History

- **What was the frontier?** Parks and Montgomery residents demonstrated that they would not tolerate segregation and proved that nonviolent protest was an effective method for creating change, which expanded the frontier for other Civil Rights Movement victories.
- **How did things change?** The boycott and Supreme Court victory showed the power of collective action and nonviolent protest strategies.

Put it all together into a thesis statement.

Rosa Parks was arrested in 1955 for refusing to give up her bus seat to a white passenger. This nonviolent protest aimed to expand the frontier of racial equality. Black citizens in Montgomery organized a year-long bus boycott, ending when the Supreme Court declared bus segregation unconstitutional, leading to other Civil Rights Movement victories.

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?

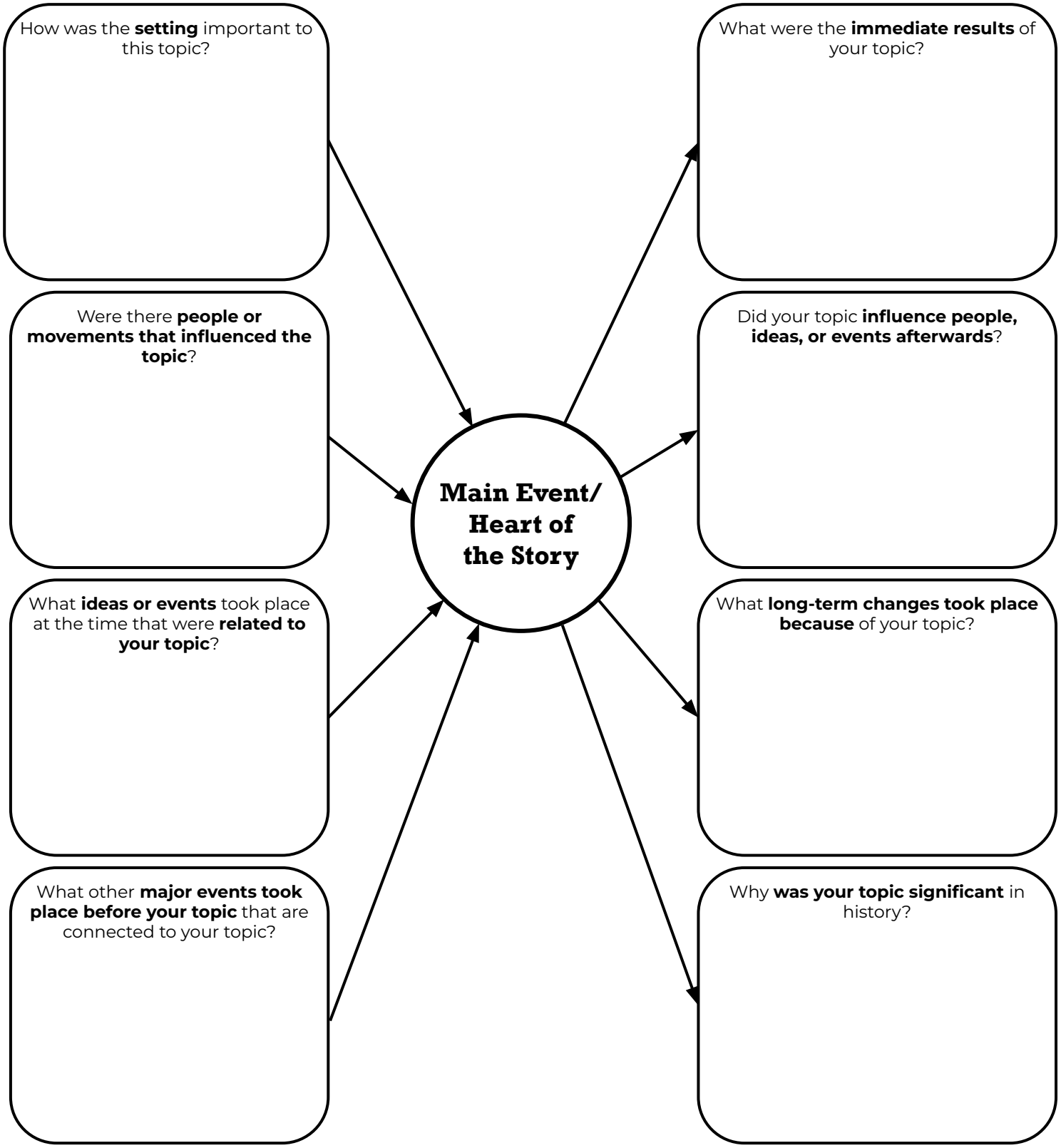
THEME CONNECTION: Frontiers in History

- **What was the frontier?**
- **How did things change?**

Put it all together into a thesis statement.

WORKSHEET: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Historical context considers the way 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.



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. Use this page to figure out which category is best for you!

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

More information on each category can be found on the History Day website: https://www.mnhs.org/historyday/categories

Choosing a Category

There are several important questions you need to think about before picking a 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 project? 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?

To help you choose 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." Keep in mind that these samples are finished products and have gone through many revisions.

The *National History Day Contest Rule Book*

Be sure to read the the *National History Day Contest Rule Book* for all of the rules for your presentation category. The *Contest Rule Book* also describes the judging criteria for competitions. Download it from our website - https://www.mnhs.org/historyday. Click on "Categories and sample projects."

WORKSHEET: PICKING A CATEGORY

Use this worksheet to explain your choices about which category you are choosing for your project

1. Which category do you want to select?

2. How does this category fit your interests and skills?

3. Explain how you will access the necessary equipment or resources to complete your project:

4. Why is this the best category to present information on your specific topic?

5. What is the biggest challenge you think you may face with this category?

CATEGORY OVERVIEW: EXHIBIT

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

Basic Rules

Word Limit: 500 student composed words

There is a 500 student-composed word limit that applies to all text that appears on an Exhibit that is created by the student.

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 6 feet high.

Circular or rotating Exhibits or those meant to be viewed from all sides may 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: 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!

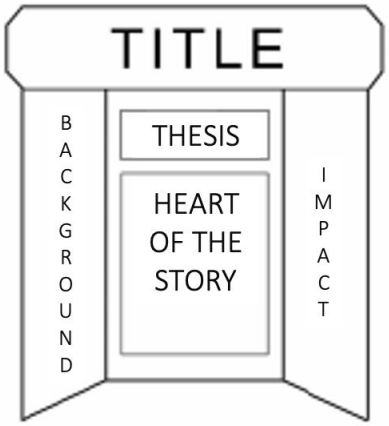
View Sample Exhibits:
https://www.mnhs.org/historyday/categories

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.

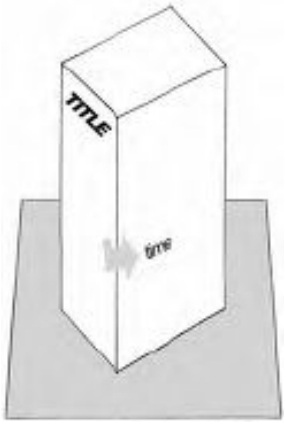
- The title will likely be the first thing the viewer looks at - It will likely be in the largest font size and near the top of your project.
- The thesis should be clear on your project itself. The center panel of an Exhibit is a great place to showcase this!
- Think carefully about the organization of your Exhibit. Use different font sizes and colors to help direct the viewer's' eye around the project.
- 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. Make 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 the argument your thesis and project are making. 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.
- How does each section support your thesis?
- What supporting evidence do you need - illustrations, quotes, etc. - to support the text?

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 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. Think of this as "the spark" that set the main event into action.

- Who were the main players and what were they doing for the main events of your topic?
- What were 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 Event" 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

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 **"Frontiers in History: Places, People, Ideas"** 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 NHDWebCentral
Your entry must be constructed using the NHDWebCentral website 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 *Rule Book* 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 Rule Book lists what you must list on the homepage.

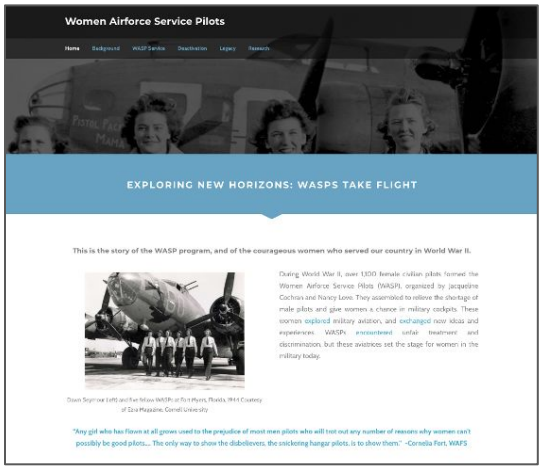
Required: Credits
Each visual on your website must have a brief credit; this does not count towards your word limit.

Required: Written Material
You must include an 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:
https://www.mnhs.org/historyday/categories

NHD Web Central



You **must** build your Website using NHDWebCentral: 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 contest judging is taking place. At the end of the school year, you will have the option to save 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 showcase your 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 a 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:** This media 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 testimonies from participants - can be another great type of evidence (and won't count toward your word limit).

Planning Your Website

Research and Plan Your Website First
It may be tempting to begin crafting your website 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 - 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?

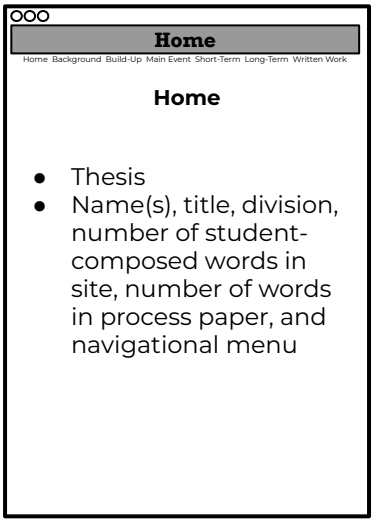
PLANNING YOUR WEBSITE

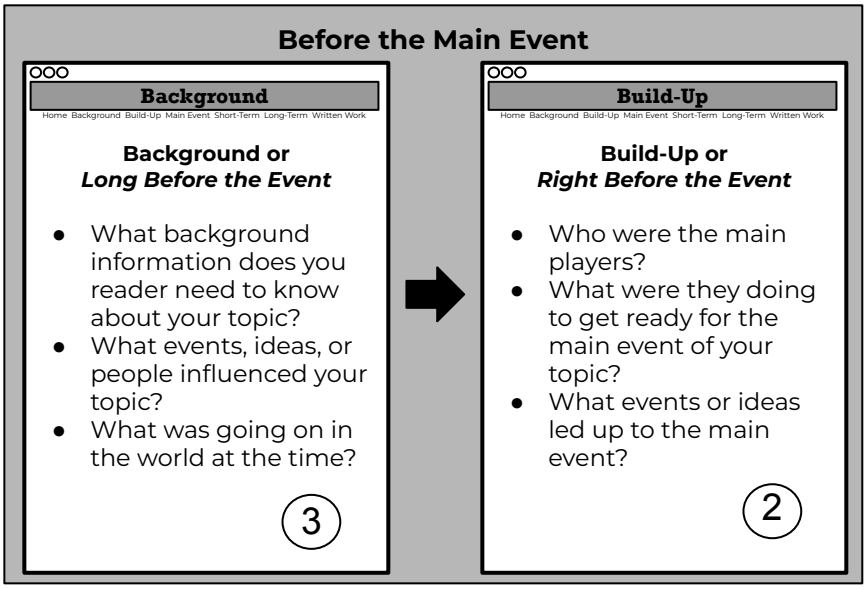
Your Website will be a set of interconnected pages that support your thesis. You should carefully select the content that goes on each of these pages - and plan this out before using NHDWebCentral.

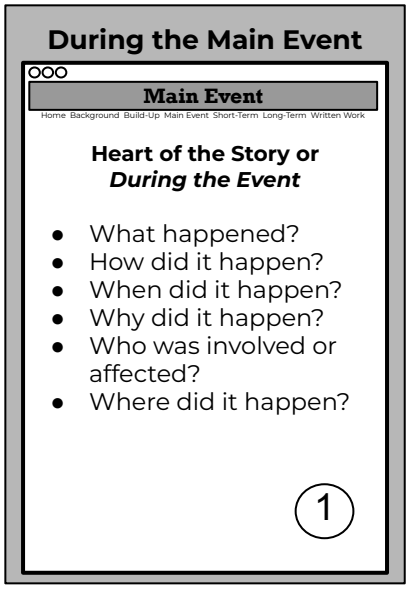
The following pages are the basics you of your topic. You may end up adding more pages, but start with the basics first.

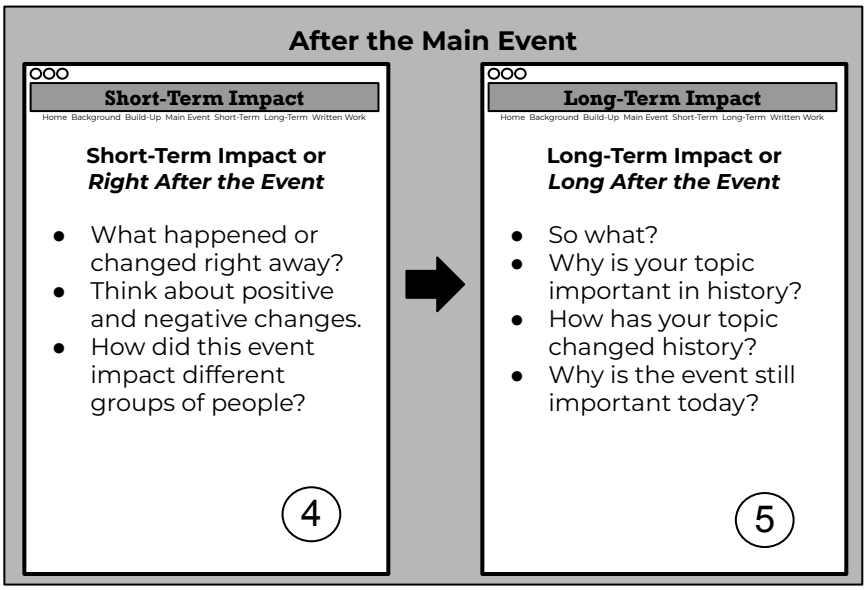
Directions: Use your thesis to decide which major ideas you want to include on each page. **Your viewer will read the pages in chronological order, but it's easier to plan out your pages with the following steps.**

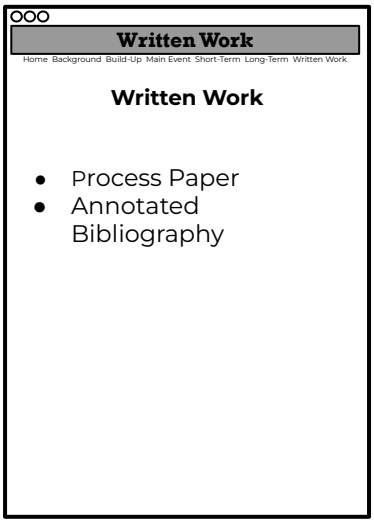
- **Step 1**: Start with the Heart of the Story and describe what happened.
- **Step 2**: Next, think about what happened right before the event. What sparked the main events of your topic?
- **Step 3:** Set your topic into larger historical context. What background information does your reader need 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.

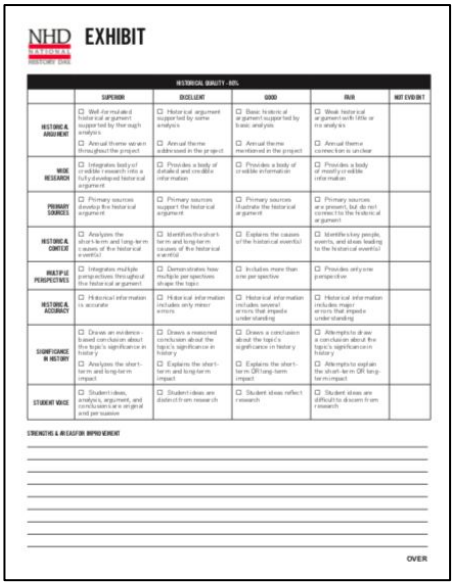











NHD EXHIBIT

HISTORICAL QUALITY - 80%

	SUPERIOR	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	NOT EVIDENT
HISTORICAL ARGUMENT	☐ Well-formulated historical argument supported by thorough analysis ☐ Annual theme woven throughout the project	☐ Historical argument supported by some analysis ☐ Annual theme addressed in the project	☐ Basic historical argument supported by basic analysis ☐ Annual theme mentioned in the project	☐ Weak historical argument with little or no analysis ☐ Annual theme connection is unclear	
WIDE RESEARCH	☐ Integrates body of credible research into a fully developed historical argument	☐ Provides a body of detailed and credible information	☐ Provides a body of credible information	☐ Provides a body of mostly credible information	
PRIMARY SOURCES	☐ Primary sources develop the historical argument	☐ Primary sources support the historical argument	☐ Primary sources illustrate the historical argument	☐ Primary sources are present, but do not connect to the historical argument	
HISTORICAL CONTEXT	☐ Analyzes the short-term and long-term causes of the historical event(s)	☐ Identifies the short-term and long-term causes of the historical event(s)	☐ Explains the causes of the historical event(s)	☐ Identifies key people, events, and ideas leading to the historical event(s)	
MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES	☐ Integrates multiple perspectives throughout the historical argument	☐ Demonstrates how multiple perspectives shape the topic	☐ Includes more than one perspective	☐ Provides only one perspective	
HISTORICAL ACCURACY	☐ Historical information is accurate	☐ Historical information includes only minor errors	☐ Historical information includes several errors that impede understanding	☐ Historical information includes major errors that impede understanding	
SIGNIFICANCE IN HISTORY	☐ Draws an evidence-based conclusion about the topic's significance in history ☐ Analyzes the short-term and long-term impact	☐ Draws a reasoned conclusion about the topic's significance in history ☐ Explains the short-term and long-term impact	☐ Draws a conclusion about the topic's significance in history ☐ Explains the short-term OR long-term impact	☐ Attempts to draw a conclusion about the topic's significance in history ☐ Attempts to explain the short-term OR long-term impact	
STUDENT VOICE	☐ Student ideas, analysis, argument, and conclusions are original and persuasive	☐ Student ideas are distinct from research	☐ Student ideas reflect research	☐ Student ideas are difficult to discern from research	

STRENGTHS & AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

OVER

EVALUATING ALL 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, use of available primary sources, historical context, multiple perspectives, historical accuracy, demonstration of significance of topic in history, and connection to theme.
- **20% Clarity of Presentation**: Uses the category effectively to clearly explain ideas and shows original student voice..
- **Rules Compliance**: Project follows general guidelines for History Day as well as category-specific rules.

CREDITS FOR WEBSITES AND EXHIBITS

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

- A credit is more brief 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.
- 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 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 word limit.*

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

CATEGORY OVERVIEW: DOCUMENTARY

A Documentary is an audio/visual presentation that uses multiple source types such as images, video, and sound to communicate the historical argument, research, and interpretation of the topic's significance in history. It is similar to a documentary you 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 when sound is first heard and ends at the conclusion of the last visual (text or image) or when 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:

https://www.mnhs.org/historyday/categories

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 a 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 together in different places.

Computer Slideshow Presentations

Using 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.

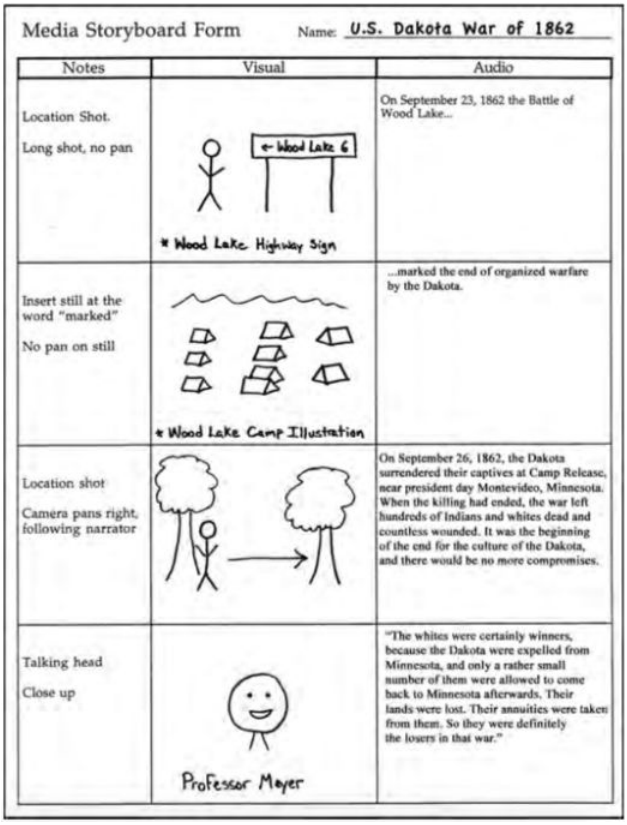
- **These types of presentations are becoming less and less common.** If you are competing, be sure to read the event materials on how to prepare your project if making a slideshow.

Planning Your Documentary

Storyboards

A storyboard is a great tool that can help you combine the audio and visual elements of your project. It can 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.



Media Storyboard Form Name: U.S. Dakota War of 1862

Notes	Visual	Audio
Location Shot. Long shot, no pan	← Wood Lake 6 * Wood Lake Highway Sign	On September 23, 1862 the Battle of Wood Lake...
Insert still at the word "marked" No pan on still	* Wood Lake Camp Illustration	...marked the end of organized warfare by the Dakota.
Location shot Camera pans right, following narrator		On September 26, 1862, the Dakota surrendered their captives at Camp Release, near present day Montevideo, Minnesota. When the killing had ended, the war left hundreds of Indians and whites dead and countless wounded. It was the beginning of the end for the culture of the Dakota, and there would be no more compromises.
Talking head Close up	Professor Mayer	"The whites were certainly winners, because the Dakota were expelled from Minnesota, and only a rather small number of them were allowed to come back to Minnesota afterwards. Their lands were lost. Their annuities were taken from them. So they were definitely the losers in that war."

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 it on screen in text.
- Remember this is 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 a theatrical performance. 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:
https://www.mnhs.org/historyday/categories

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 people based on your research.

Scenes

You may have one or more scenes for your characters. Your script, props, and any set pieces will help identify the scenes for your audience.

Props and Set

Props or parts of the set can help tell the story. These may include objects, historical documents, furniture or set pieces (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 a historically appropriate or neutral costume for your characters. Keep it simple! Fancy costumes can be difficult.

Planning Your Performance

1. **Research Comes First**
Avoid jumping right in and writing a script first. Instead, do your research first! Research the foundation for your entire project.

2. **Develop a Thesis**
Even in the Performance category, you will 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 are best to share with your audience. Be creative! Consider both major and minor players in your topic. Who was 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 performance choice is limited and often prevents you from discussing multiple points of view and 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. Use actual dialogue, quotations, or take excerpts from speeches to add historical detail.

PLANNING YOUR PERFORMANCE

Performance is the most creative History Day category. It's impossible to give you a formula for a Performance. They can be in many different formats and will vary based on the number of group members, characters, scenes, 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. Get 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 your 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.

SCENE BRAINSTORM

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

Scene #1

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

Setting:

Timeframe:

Describe Scene:

Scene #2

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

Setting:

Timeframe:

Describe Scene:

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 more of a minor 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 using Abraham Lincoln, consider being one of his advisors or aides who lived after his death. This would give you 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.

Individual 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:
https://www.mnhs.org/historyday/categories

Picking the Research Paper Category

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

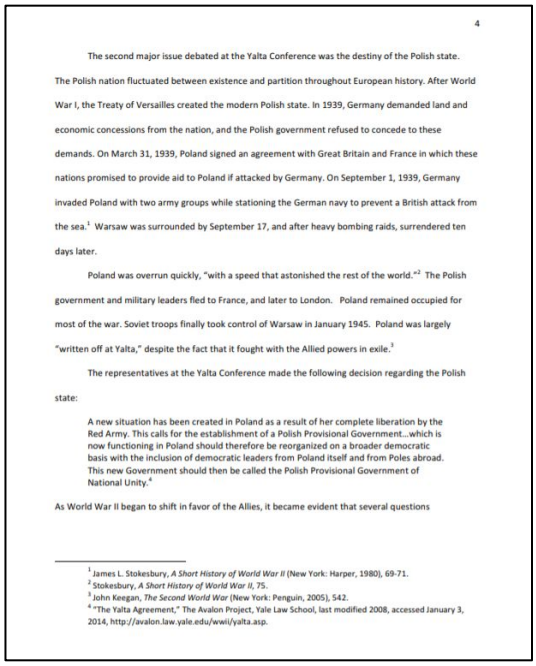
Want to work alone. You are responsible for all aspects of your project - there is no such thing as a group paper!

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

Have a topic that fits with the category. You won't be able to use many 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**.



4

The second major issue debated at the Yalta Conference was the destiny of the Polish state. The Polish nation fluctuated between existence and partition throughout European history. After World War I, the Treaty of Versailles created the modern Polish state. In 1939, Germany demanded land and economic concessions from the nation, and the Polish government refused to concede to these demands. On March 31, 1939, Poland signed an agreement with Great Britain and France in which these nations promised to provide aid to Poland if attacked by Germany. On September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland with two army groups while stationing the German navy to prevent a British attack from the sea.[1] Warsaw was surrounded by September 17, and after heavy bombing raids, surrendered ten days later.

Poland was overrun quickly, "with a speed that astonished the rest of the world."[2] The Polish government and military leaders fled to France, and later to London. Poland remained occupied for most of the war. Soviet troops finally took control of Warsaw in January 1945. Poland was largely "written off at Yalta," despite the fact that it fought with the Allied powers in exile.[3]

The representatives at the Yalta Conference made the following decision regarding the Polish state:

> A new situation has been created in Poland as a result of her complete liberation by the Red Army. This calls for the establishment of a Polish Provisional Government...which is now functioning in Poland should therefore be reorganized on a broader democratic basis with the inclusion of democratic leaders from Poland itself and from Poles abroad. This new Government should then be called the Polish Provisional Government of National Unity.[4]

As World War II began to shift in favor of the Allies, it became evident that several questions

[1] James L. Stokesbury, *A Short History of World War II* (New York: Harper, 1980), 69-71.
[2] Stokesbury, *A Short History of World War II*, 75.
[3] John Keegan, *The Second World War* (New York: Penguin, 2005), 542.
[4] "The Yalta Agreement," The Avalon Project, Yale Law School, last modified 2008, accessed January 3, 2014, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/wwii/yalta.asp.

Superscript numbers are small numbers next to words or sentences in the body of your paper that will direct readers to citations at the bottom of the page - the footnotes.

What is a footnote?

Footnotes are explanations provided by writers about the ideas or quotations presented in the Paper that are not the author's own. Footnotes not only give credit to the sources for ideas, but also serve as "evidence" in support of your ideas.

Footnotes occur in three instances:

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 their 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 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 answering:

- 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.