CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT - THE HISTORY DAY JUDGING PROCESS

The Benefits of the Evaluation Process
The goal of National History Day is to provide you with a high-quality, educational experience—whether or not you win a prize. The judges' evaluations are part of the learning and skill building process of NHD. The judges’ evaluations help you to improve areas or skills and provide positive feedback for the hard work you have put into producing your project. The judges’ comments also can provide you with ideas for revisions and enhancements as you move from one contest level to the next. Remember, regardless of how your entry is ranked, by participating in National History Day you will benefit from the experience. You will gain research, thinking, and presentation skills, which will last your whole life. You will become an expert on a topic of interest to you and to others. You will acquire poise and self-confidence and will learn to manage your time. You are a winner.

Who are the Judges?
Historians, educators, and others interested in history and education serve as judges at each level of the National History Day competition.

How Does the Evaluation Process Work?
At official National History Day contests, each separate National History Day division and category is usually judged as a whole by a panel of judges. Time constraints, due to the number of entries, often require that some categories be evaluated initially by several teams of judges. Finals then become necessary. In such cases, the entries judged best by each team of initial judges are re-evaluated by a new team of judges to determine the winning entries in the category. The number of entries in finals and procedures for judging vary by contest and category and are within the discretion of the contest officials.

Consensus Judging
Judges will not assign a numerical score to each entry; rather, they will rank the entries in their group. Judges are required to consult with each other in determining individual rankings. Judges are allowed to review the results of their category upon completion of the judging to assure accuracy in the evaluation process. As a final step, the judges will assign each entry an overall rating.

The Subjective Nature of Judging
Remember: judges must evaluate certain aspects of your entry that are objective (e.g., were primary sources used; is the written material grammatically correct and accurately spelled). But judges must also evaluate interpretive aspects of your entry that are qualitative in nature (e.g., analysis and conclusions about the historical data).

Historians often reach different opinions about the significance of the same data. It is therefore crucial for you to base your interpretations and conclusions on solid research. Judges will check to determine whether you used available primary sources and if you were careful to examine all sides of an issue and present a balanced account of your research and presentation. Your process paper and annotated bibliography are critical to this process.

The Decision of the Judges is Final
You, your parents, and your teachers should realize that inadvertent inequities may occur in judging and that contest officials do want to be informed of any problems. The decisions of the judges are final.