National History Day Georgia
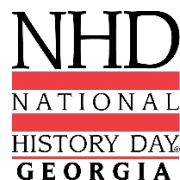
RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES IN HISTORY

NATIONAL HISTORY DAY 2025

Guide to National History Day 2024-25

A guide for students

_____

Your name here

LAGRANGE COLLEGE 1831

NHD NATIONAL HISTORY DAY GEORGIA

Georgia Humanities
Sharing stories that move us and make us

Research, Analysis and **Presentation.**

Research

Analysis

Presentation

The Annual History Day Theme

Each year National History Day selects a theme. When participating in history day, you'll have to select a topic that is related to that theme. In fact, one of the important components of a history day project is the student's ability to **relate** her/his topic to the theme. The annual theme frames the research for both students and teachers. It is intentionally broad enough that students can select topics from any place (local, national, or world) and any time period in history. Once students choose their topics, they investigate historical context, historical significance, and the topic's relationship to the theme by conducting research in libraries, archives, and museums; through oral history interviews; and by visiting historic sites.   Remember: History Day projects aren't just reports with dates and facts, they are studies of a topic's **significance** and **importance** in history.

2025: Rights and Responsibilities in History

This year's theme, *Rights and Responsibilities in History* invites students to consider the complexities of the way in which we understand the relationship between the idea of rights and responsibilities that often come with them. As is always the case with History Day themes, this year's is broad and as such requires the student to consider first the terms themselves.

As Cathy Gorn writes in this year's theme book:

"the NHD theme for this year is focused on both historical rights and responsibilities. NHD projects must focus on both as well." We often take for granted the term "rights" and its definition but remember the notion of what is a right versus a privilege has been passionately debated so allow some time to really think about the history of the "right/s" you're studying.

Again, from the themebook:

"To study rights and responsibilities in history we must ask a number of questions:

Who decides who has rights?

Does everyone have the same rights?

Who decides on the limits individuals should or should not have? Why?

What led to establishing certain rights, and to whom were they given?

Regardless of the topic selected, students must not only present a description of it, but also draw conclusions about how their topic affected individuals, communities, nations, or the world.

To understand the historical importance of their topics, students, like historians, must ask questions of time and place, cause and effect, change over time, and impact and significance:

- **What** factors contributed to the debate over a right?

- **Why** did the issue develop? How did it create change?

- **What** were the immediate and long-term consequences of the codification of the right?

- **What** responsibilities are incumbent to that right?

- **What** impact did such have on the people who experienced it? How did they, in turn, affect it?

- **What** is the long term impact/significance of the right/s on individuals and society?

Getting Started

Begin by exploring topics in an area that interests you. Perhaps you're interested in military history, sports history or women's history. Talk to your teacher, parents and librarian about topics and look for possible topics in books, as well as online.

Take a look at the annual NHD Theme Book for information and topic ideas!
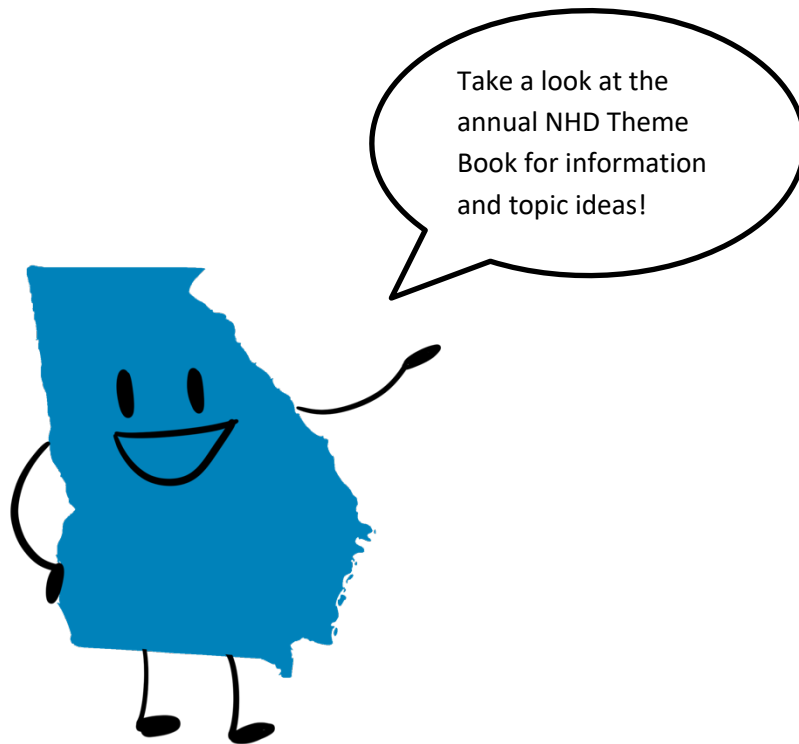
SELECTING A TOPIC

Keys to consider when selecting a topic:

- **Make sure it fits the theme**. Ask yourself: "how does this relate to the theme?"
- **Make sure you're interested in it!** A history day project requires a lot of time and effort. Your topic has to be something you're truly interested in and excited about!
- **Availability of research**. Take a look online and in library catalogs. Talk to your teacher and media specialist about your ideas and make sure you that (a) research materials are available (both primary and secondary) and (b) that you can get access to them.
- **Your topic has historical significance**. Every successful history day project makes the case that the topic was important to history.   It has be able to explain to the viewer/reader 'why' this topic is important; 'why' we need to pay attention to this topic in history. In other words, it successfully explains the topic's **historical significance**!
- **Your topic is historic**. Although it's not a 'rule' we do suggest that you select topics that have occurred at least 25 years in the past. This is to ensure that (a) material is available and (b) enough time has passed that historians have been able to offer some analysis/interpretation of the event, its context and significance.

Like your topic! You'll be spending a lot of time with it!

www.lagrange.edu/nhd
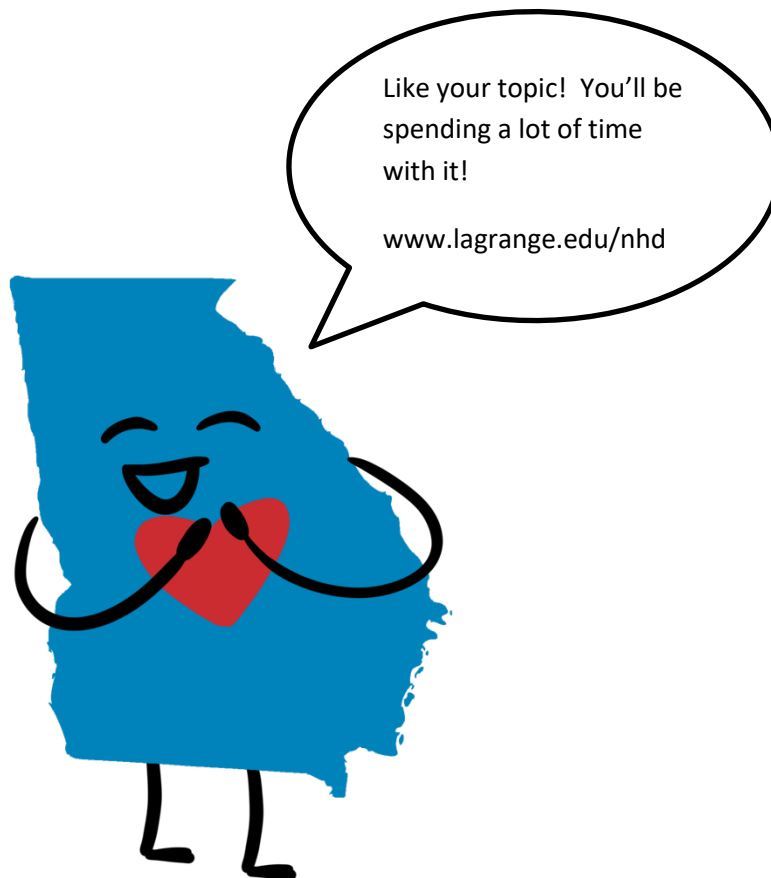
EXPLORING TOPIC POSSIBILITIES

WORKSHEET: TOPIC BRAINSTORM

A good way to choose a topic is to 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   "THE FUNNEL"

One of the most important elements of a successful and effective history day project is a topic that is **narrow and focused**! History Day projects are limited in size and you have to be able to make your point about the significance of your topic within those limitations, so focus, focus, focus!

THEME

Broad Topic

Narrow Topic

Focused Topic

Thesis (product of research)
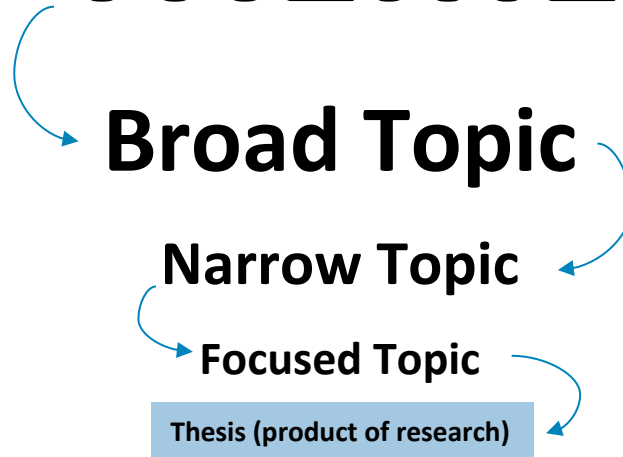
Now let's take a look at an example:

Rights & Responsibilities in History

Magna Carta

Abuses of Royal Power

Baronial Rebellion that leads to Royal concessions

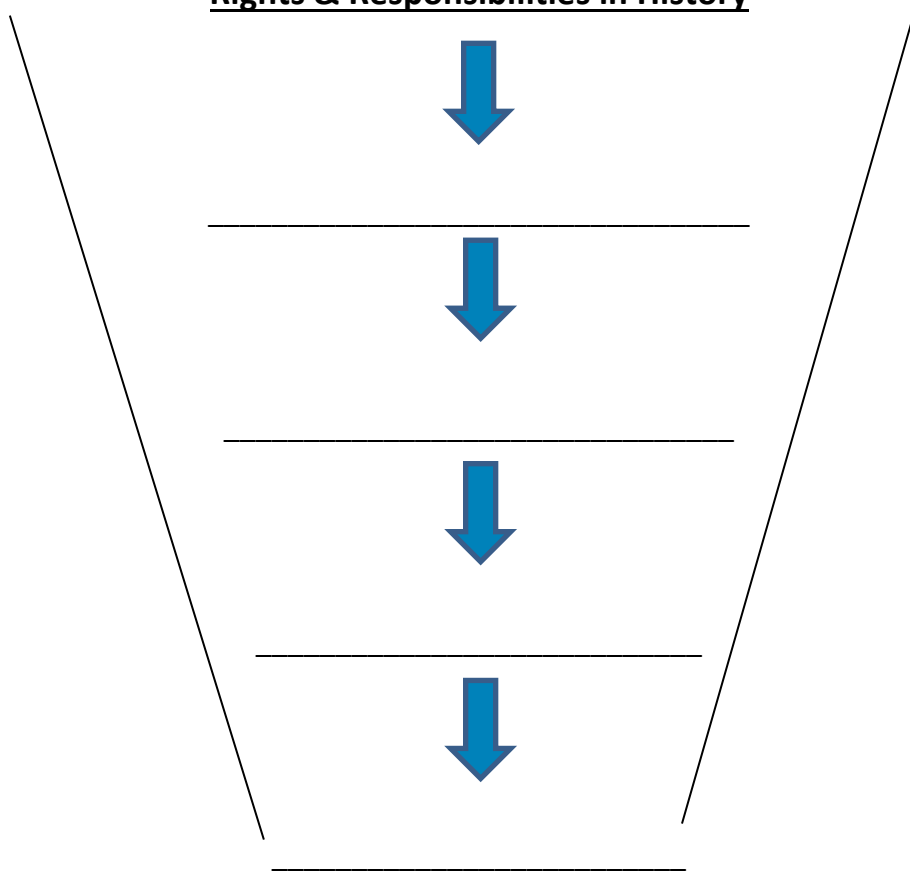**What rights and responsibilities are enumerated in the charter?**

By codifying specific rights and responsibilities between King and Baron, Magna Carta established the principle of no one being exempt from the rule of law.
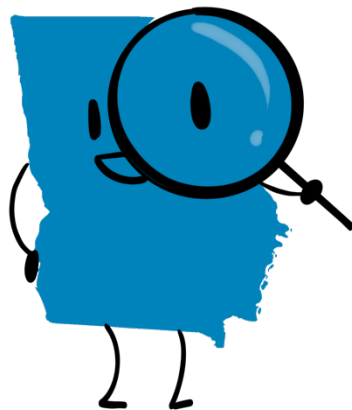
Topic Funnel Worksheet

Use the funnel to narrow your general interest into a focused topic

<u>Rights & Responsibilities in History</u>

_____

_____

_____

_____

When you're thinking about a topic it's better to be 'an inch wide and a mile deep'

RESEARCH   The 'Heart & Soul' of it!

Research is the foundation of your NHD project. The stronger the foundation, the stronger the project. You have to remember that a successful researcher is:

- Informed – She knows how to find information
- Organized – She keeps track of her notes and sources

Where do I start?

After talking with your teacher about a possible topic you need to get a good introduction to it. For that you need to visit your school media center or public library where you can find an encyclopedia. An encyclopedia article is basically an overview of its subject. It introduces you to the basic understanding that's developed surrounding the topic. A good discipline specific encyclopedia will have articles at the end of which the author lists basic sources for further reading (mostly secondary but sometimes primary). Articles containing these 'suggested readings' or 'bibliographies' are GOLD!!!! Not only does the article give you a general introduction but it gives you the beginning of a bibliography! You can then get the titles in that 'suggested reading' list and before you know it you're rollin'!

Remember though that an encyclopedia is only the beginning. It gets you started but you should not depend solely upon it. Your research needs to be dominated by scholarly secondary sources and primary sources.

How do I find more sources?

As you get further into your research you will want to search for additional sources, more unique sources, both primary and secondary. To do that you might visit

- **College or University Libraries:** These academic libraries house sources a public library or your school library usually can't, including academic journals, books written by leading scholars in the field you're studying (secondary sources) and primary source collections like historic newspapers.
- **Historical Societies**: Local and regional history topics can make for very powerful history day projects. If your topic is local or state history, you'll want to visit a regional or state historical society. These institutions collect and preserve information about Georgia.
- **Interviews**: Although they are not required, an interview with someone connected to your project can be very helpful. If the person was involved in your topic, you'll be conducting an oral history interview. Contact your subject in advance and get their permission to be recorded in writing. Prepare your questions in advance and come equipped to either take notes or record the session. If you can't meet in person, you can talk by phone or via email. Remember to thank your interview subject and send a thank you note afterward.
- **Talk to a Librarian**: Librarians are arguably the best resources for finding information. Librarians are professional information-gatherers and keepers. If it's out there, they'll find it!

What about the Internet?

As you know, the internet is a remarkable resource for information. You can simply ask your web browser a question and it'll give you page after page of websites with the answer. That can be a blessing and a curse. You must approach the internet with the critical eye of a 'scholar.'

- The internet can be an informative place to start your research. Just like your library there are online encyclopedias and dictionaries that can provide you with a solid introduction. You'll want to look for articles with citations and references in order to verify their validity, but they are out there.
- If your school has access to **GALILEO** visit the National History Day webpage. It is a customized guide built just for you! Anything you access through **GALILEO** has been reviewed by academics, so unlike a general web search you can have full confidence in the sources you find.
- You can use the internet to prepare for a visit to an academic library or archive by using their online catalogs, pathfinders, and databases to identify the sources you want to consult when you visit.
- Online exhibits and document collections. Many institutions have begun to digitize their collections and make them accessible via the web. Once you've gotten into your research and have narrowed your topic you can take advantage of these online collections of primary sources.

Beware!!! Not all websites are created equal!

- Pay attention to the site host. If it's an academic institution (.edu) or a governmental agency (.gov or .uk) you can have more confidence in the accuracy of the information on the site than if it was hosted by 'aliensbuiltit.com'. **Please be careful.**
- Online research should be conducted along with traditional historical research, NOT replace it.
- Students often find the same information restated on one website after another. The traditional scholarship on the field (books and journals) will offer you a deeper and more nuanced exploration of the topic which is exactly what you need for your history day project!
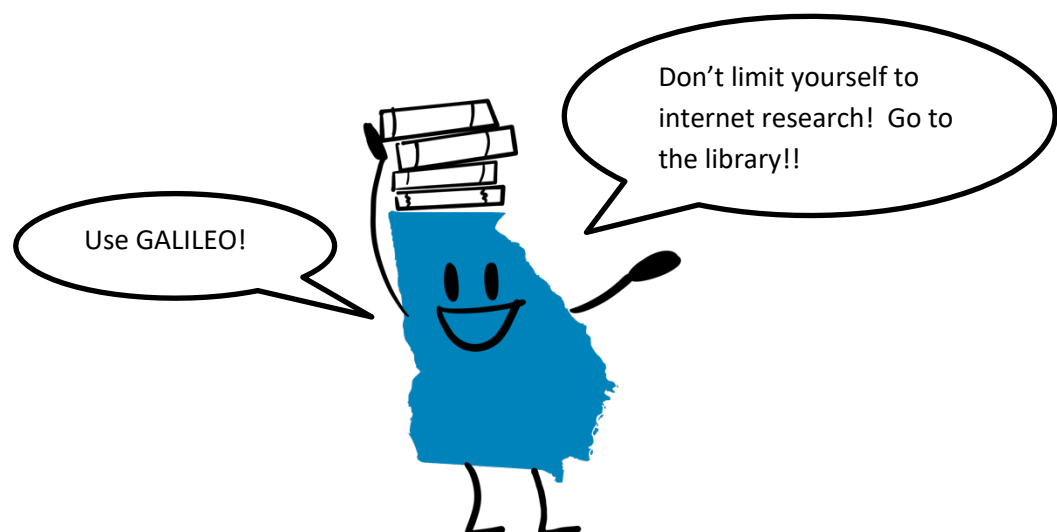
Artificial Intelligence (AI) and NHD

We encourage you to use the full array of tools available to you as you conduct your research. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is an emerging technology that is transforming all facets of our lives. As you consider these new tools remember: Academic integrity is at the core of NHD and any use of AI et other technologies must be used properly and cited accordingly. Some things to consider:

Ways you may use AI

- Brainstorming topic ideas
- Brainstorming key words to research a topic
- Looking for resources you can find in a library
- Reviewing your writing for grammatical and punctuation mistakes
- Simplifying the language in a source to make it more understandable

AI usage to AVOID

- Letting AI create elements of your project for you. For example, do not use AI to write text or create charges, graphs, images, or video for your project.
- Letting AI do your topic analysis for you
- Using AI tools to provide actual evidence or quotations for your project. Remember: AI can and does **hallucinate!**
  - **Hallucinate?** AI will provide made up/incorrect information if its algorithm doesn't find information readily available. Thus, use caution with AI tools.

NHD Rules that apply to AI

- Rule 4: Student Research
- Rule 10: Reasonable Help
- Category rules that focus on originality of the work

Citing AI

- Both MLA and Chicago/Turabian style sheets now include guidance on AI annotations. Please consult them and remember: AI is a secondary source.

PRIMARY & SECONDARY SOURCES

When historians study a topic they try to gather material from a wide variety of sources. They do this so that they can understand their topic in its **historical context**. They also need to understand what questions about their topic have already been answered by scholars. In the end, historians (like lawyers) need evidence to "make their case." There are two basic categories of sources historians use: **Primary** and **Secondary**. You need to use **both** to have a successful History Day project.

Secondary Sources

Secondary sources are published books or scholarly articles composed by an author who is offering an analysis/interpretation of the topic. This analysis and interpretation is based upon primary sources but the author **is not an eyewitness to, or a participant in, the historic event**. Most of the books, encyclopedias, and websites you'll consult are secondary sources. These sources are fundamental to your work because they provide the background information you need. They give you an understanding of a topic's historical context as well as a sense of what scholars are saying about your topic. The **footnotes and bibliographies** of secondary sources will lead you to additional secondary and critically important primary sources.

Examples of Secondary sources

- ✓ Encyclopedias
- ✓ Biographies
- ✓ Textbooks
- ✓ Media Documentaries
- ✓ Books about your topic
- ✓ Interviews with scholars/experts
- ✓ Articles about the topic
- ✓ Websites

Primary Sources

Primary sources are materials **produced by people in the place, at the time your topic occurred**. They provide a first-hand account about a person or an event because they were produced in the time you are studying. These are eyewitness accounts, documents published at the time of the event.

Examples of Primary sources

- ✓ Historic objects
- ✓ Government records
- ✓ Photographs
- ✓ Manuscript collections
- ✓ Newspapers from the era
- ✓ Music of the era
- ✓ Interviews with participants (oral history)/ Letters
- ✓ Original film footage
- ✓ Autobiographies

Remember to funnel your research the way you funneled your topic. You want to move from the general to the specific, from secondary to primary. We always want to jump right to the primary sources but the only way to get the most out of your primary sources is to have first grounded yourself in the secondary scholarship. So, think of the funnel!

Use the funnel to focus your research

Encylopedia, Documentary Film/video, website

Secondary Book/Article

Secondary Book/Article

Primary

Primary
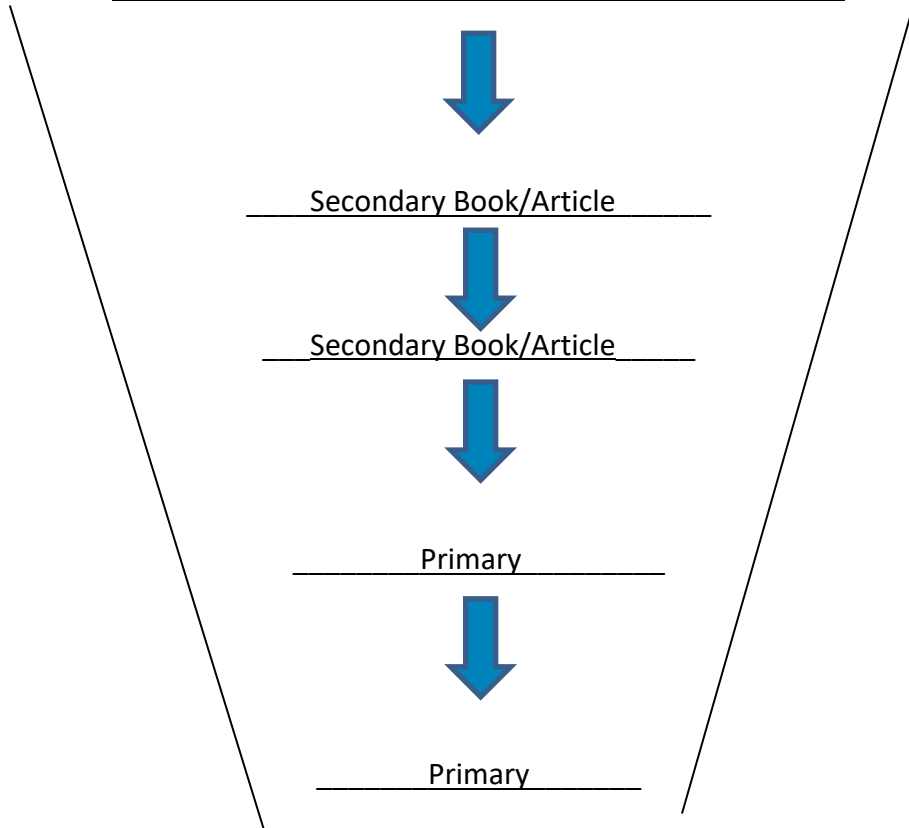
STAYING ORGANIZED

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's what your note cards might look like

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Bibliography   Secondary   Book

Goodwin, Doris Kearns. Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005.

Biography of Abraham Lincoln and the key political rivals/figures who shaped the Lincoln presidency. Deeply detailed history of the political leaders as well as the civil war itself.

Important pages:

Team of Rivals   Goodwin, p. 471

Horace Greeley's open letter to Lincoln in the *New York Tribune* Lincoln replied in a letter of his own

"As to the policy I 'seem to be pursuing' as you say, I have not meant to leave anyone in doubt," he began. "My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or to destroy slavery."

Remember too that there are a variety of apps and web based tools you can use to keep your work organized. Talk with your teacher or media specialist about which ones are available through your school.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

A successful research project requires more than just locating as much information as you can. You want your topic to be narrow and focused. Achieving that is helped by developing and being guided by good research questions

Good research questions will allow you to exam the 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 and actions affect future choices? What has changed? Remember: research questions will take you beyond the basic who, what, when, & how. **They will get you to an understanding of "Why"!**

WORKSHEET: WRITING RESEARCH QUESTIONS

PART OF PROJECT	SAMPLE: ROSA PARKS	YOUR TOPIC
Long Before • 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?	What was going on in the Civil Rights Movement at the time? How were African Americans treated? What were the key points of debate in America over the Civil Rights Movement?	
Right Before • Who are the main players and what are they doing to prepare for the main events of the topic? • What are the events leading up to the main event?	Who was Rosa Parks? Why didn't Rosa Parks give up her bus seat? What were leaders in Montgomery doing to prepare for this event?	
Main Event • What happened?	What happened after Rosa Parks refused to give up her bus seat?	
Right After • What are some of the reactions to the main event? Include both positive and negative • Did anything change 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? Did debate intensify?	

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 did the Montgomery Bus Boycott turn debate into action in both the city and 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.

Topic: _____

1. **What are some important words, dates or people related to your topic?** These 'key' terms will help you to search for information.

   _____   _____   _____

   _____   _____   _____

   _____   _____   _____

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

   Book   **Media Documentary**   **Encyclopedia**

   History Textbook   **Biography**   **Website**

   Interview with Scholar **Journal article**

3. **What types of primary sources might exist about your topic?** From the list below, circle the types of sources you can find about your topic.

   Diary   Manuscript collection   Government Records
   Oral History   Autobiography   Newspaper from time
   Original film footage   Music of the period   Photographs
   Historic object   Letters

4. **Where can you go to find this information?** Answer the following questions and think about the places you could visit for your research

   a. **What is the first place you plan on looking for information?** _____

   b. **Where else can you look?** Circle which you plan to visit.

   School media center   Public library   College Library

Historical center   Archive   Internet

    c.   **What other places can you go?** _____

    d.   Is there a **Research Roundup** event/session you can attend? If so write the date and location below. _____

WORKING ON YOUR OWN OR IN A GROUP

Working On Your Own

When you work on your own <mark>the effort is less complicated</mark>. There are no divided responsibilities, potential distractions or disagreements you might encounter in a group. With no one else to depend on, the success of your History Day project rests on your shoulders.

Working in a Group

Being in a group has distinct advantages. You and your colleagues can share the work. Each member will bring her/his unique set of skills and interests to the project. Your project will be the product of a team effort.

Be careful when choosing your group members. When selecting group members ask the following:

- ✓ What type of people do I like to work with?
- ✓ What skills will each group member bring to the project?
- ✓ What makes 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? _____

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

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

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

Working Alone	**Working in a Group**
What will be your responsibilities?	What will be some of the challenges?
Why is working alone the best choice for you?	Why is working in a group best for you?

PART TWO   ANALYSIS

With your research nearing completion it's time to begin analyzing your information and drawing conclusions. Your goal is make an argument, related to the theme, and clearly making a case about the significance of your topic to history. This argument is known as your thesis statement, it is the **central focus of your entire History Day project**.

Thesis Statements

Regardless of the category you eventually decide upon, your thesis statement, your argument, must be the centerpiece of your work. You will want your thesis statement to be a part of the introduction and conclusion of a paper, website, performance or documentary, the clear and central to your exhibit. It is the essential point you want to make through your work!

You must use your thesis statement as a guide to the construction of your project. **Every component of your project MUST support your thesis!**

Writing a thesis statement can be challenging, hard work. You'll want to edit, revise and rewrite your thesis statement throughout. Use the worksheet included in this packet to help you get started but remember: **effective scholars and writers revise their work throughout the process!**

Make your thesis statement focused and specific! Edit, edit, edit!
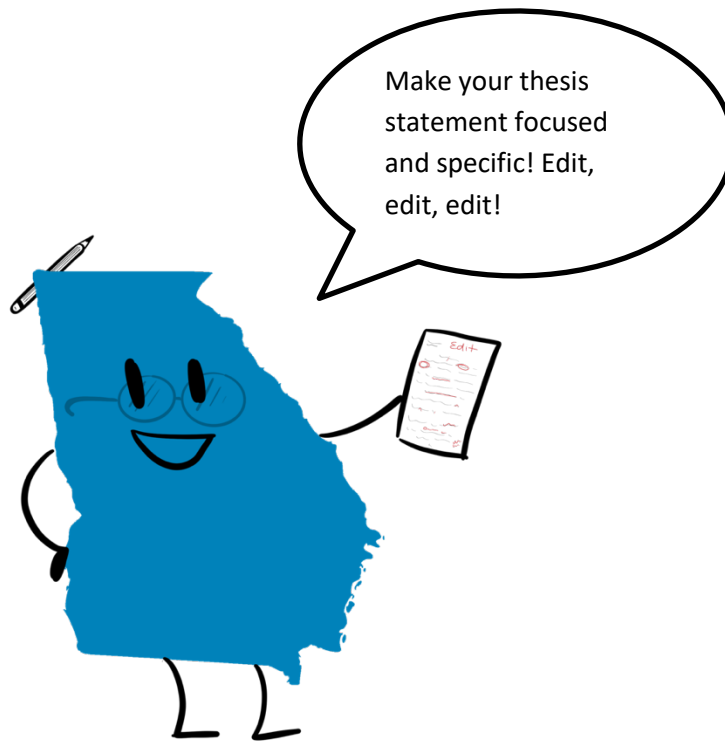
Remember your **research questions**! They can help when developing your thesis statement. The answers to your research questions can be the basis for a good thesis statement.

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?	In 1955, Rosa Parks was arrested when she refused to give up her bus seat to a white passenger in Montgomery, Alabama. In response, Martin Luther King, Jr. lead activists and the African American people of Montgomery through a 381 day bus boycott, which resulted in a triumphant Supreme Court battle for desegregation.

Remember your theme connection!

As you are thinking about developing your thesis statement, remember to think again about the theme. The strongest History Day projects will weave the central ideas of the theme into the thesis as well as the project.

Try to get the key words into your thesis and consider using them in your section headings to text. You can use variations of the theme words because what's most important is that the concepts, the ideas of the theme are in your project.

Historical Context

Your topic did not occur in a vacuum. Nothing in history ever does. Everything that happened in history did so in a world full of forces influencing/interacting with your topic. Understanding that context and effectively communicating it is critical to a successful History Day project. Remember, the environment, the context is fundamental to your topic and you want to do your best to understand that historical context.

Remember too that a thorough understanding of your topic's historical context will make your argument for the significance of your topic to history more powerful.
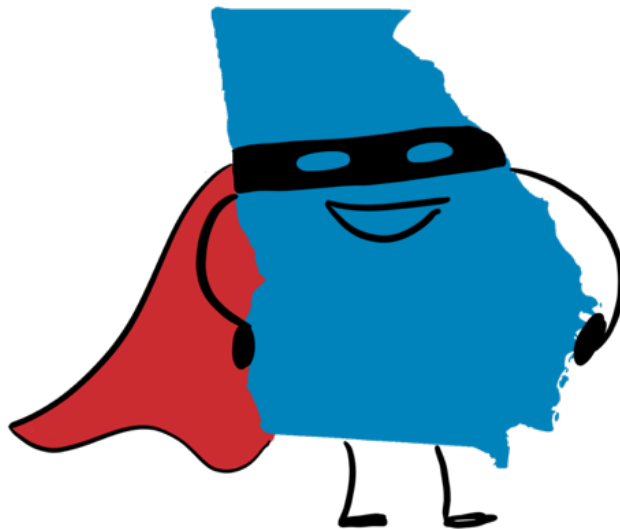
WORKSHEET: THESIS STATEMENTS

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?

THEME CONNECTION: TURNING POINTS IN HISTORY

Now, put it together into a thesis statement

_____

_____

_____

_____

HISTORICAL CONTEXT & SIGNIFICANCE

CONTEXT

How was the setting important?
What people/movements influenced it?
What people, ideas or events took place at the same time the were related to your topic?
What were the main events occurring before your topic? What caused it to happen?

Main Event/Heart of the Story
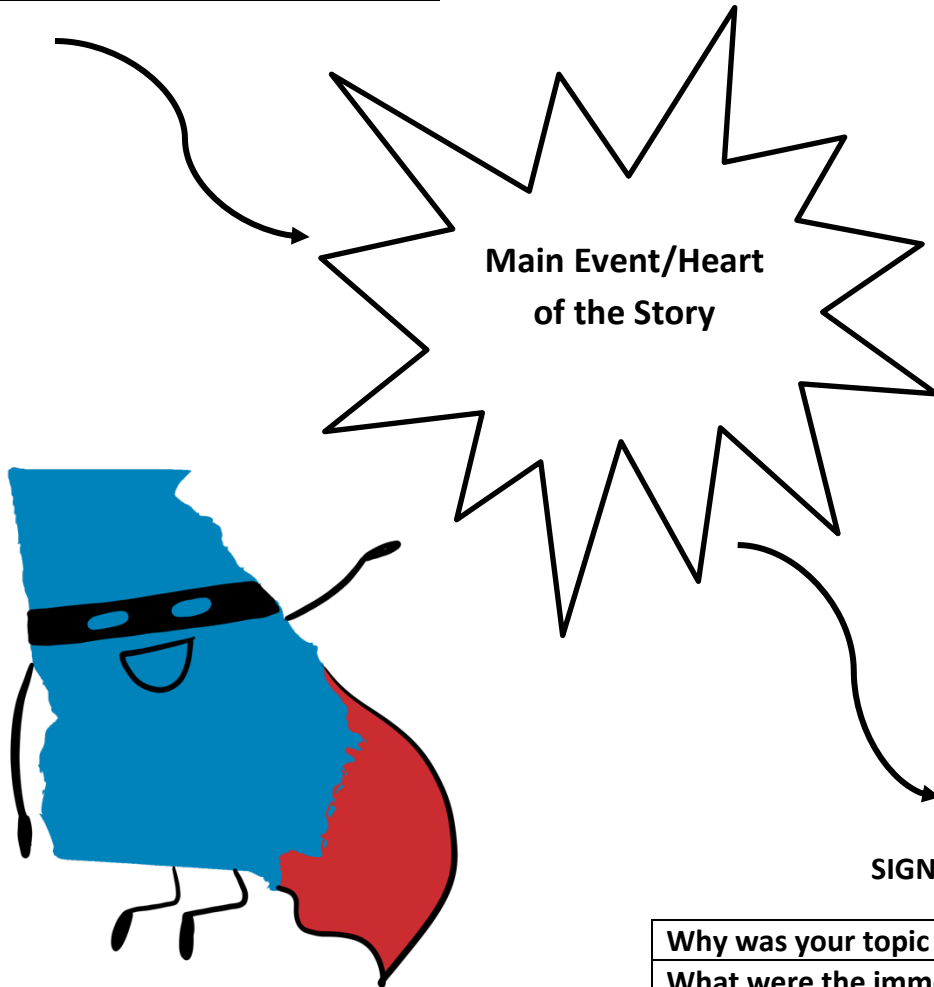
SIGNIFICANCE

Why was your topic significant in history?
What were the immediate results of your topic?
What long term changes took place because of your topic?
Did your topic influence people, ideas or events afterwards?

PART THREE   PRESENTATION

The third part of this guide offers ideas on how to present your research in one of the following History Day categories, including planning projects and category tips.

- RESEARCH PAPER
- EXHIBIT
- DOCUMENTARY
- PERFORMANCE
- WEBSITE

Remember, the research paper category is only open to individual entries. 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 suggestions presented here are not complete. These ideas are only a starting point, and you are encouraged to create your own strategies for developing your project.

Choosing a Category

When selecting a category it is important to consider the following:

- 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 www.nhd.org. This may help give you ideas about the best way to present your topic. Your own creativity, in combination with good research, will make your presentation stand out.

The History Day Contest Rule Book

After choosing your category be sure to consult the History Day *Contest Rule Book* for complete information on the rules that relate to your entry. The *Contest Rule Book* will also describe the judging criteria for evaluating History Day entries. Your teacher may be able to supply you with a *Contest Rule Book* or you can download one from our website. Go to http://www.lagrange.edu/nhd and click on "Rule Book."

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.
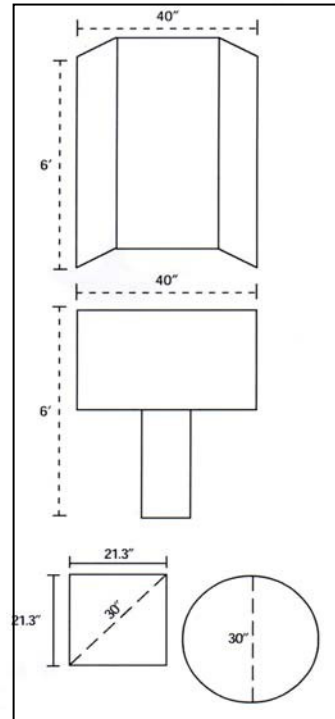
Size Requirements - The overall size of your exhibit when displayed for judging must be no larger than 40 inches wide, 30 inches deep, and six feet high. Measurement of the exhibit does not include the table on which it rests; however, it would include any stand that you create and any table drapes. Circular or rotating exhibits or those meant to be viewed from all sides must be no more than 30 inches in diameter.

Word Limit - There is a 500-word limit that applies to all text created by the student that appears on or as part of an exhibit entry. This includes the text you write for titles, subtitles, captions, graphs, timelines, media devices (e.g., video or computer files), or supplemental materials (e.g. photo albums, scrapbooks, etc.) where you use your own words. You must give a brief credit for each visual on your board, but these do not count towards your word limit. If you use a media device, you are limited to three minutes of audio or video.

Common Exhibit Types

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.
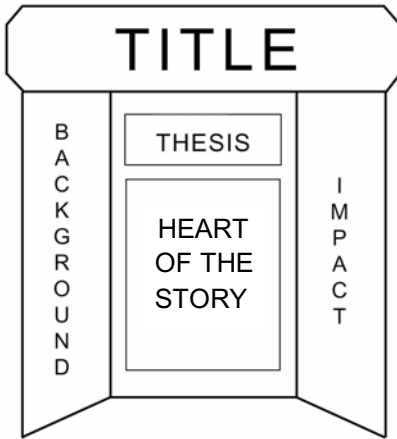
- Be sure your title is the main focus your project.
- Try to use the center panel to present your thesis.
- Remember that you read from left to right, so your exhibit should be in a logical order, beginning with the left panel.
- Artifacts or other materials may also be placed on the table between the side panels. Make sure they relate directly to your topic.

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

Make sure you design your 3D exhibit so viewers know where to begin!
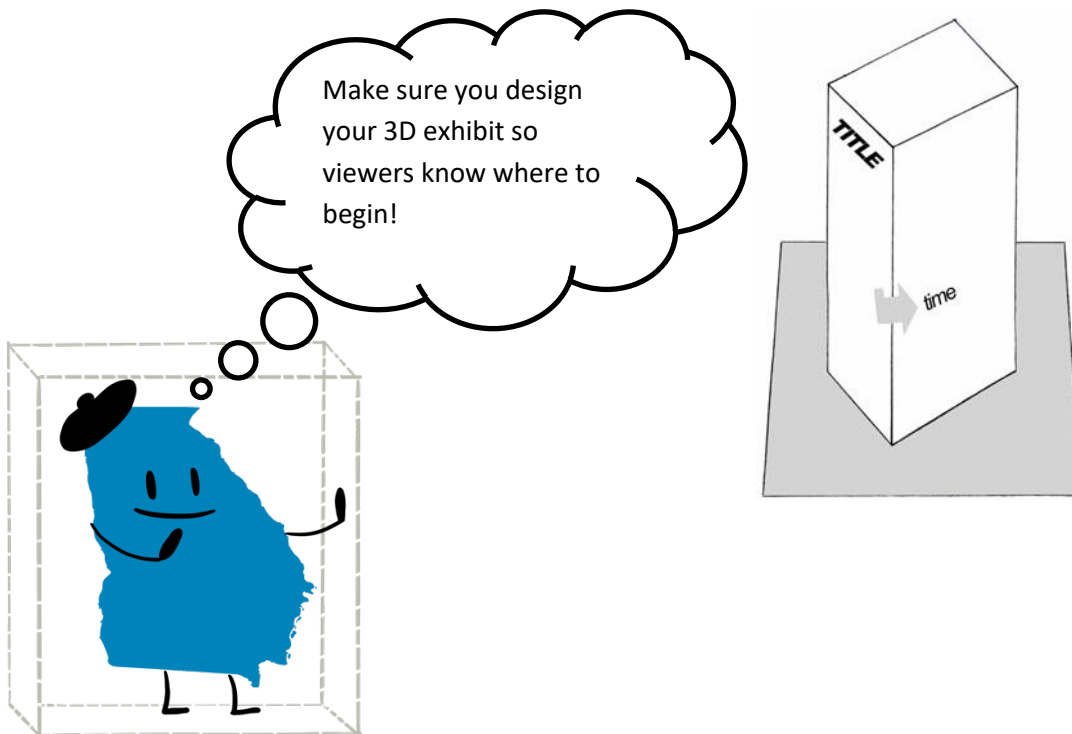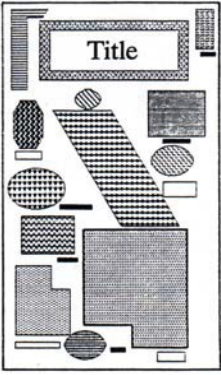
Planning Your Exhibit

A successful exhibit entry must be able to explain itself. The judges shouldn't need to depend on your interview to understand your argument. It is important that you design your exhibit in a way that your photographs, written materials, and illustrations are easy to understand and to follow.

Avoiding Clutter

It is always tempting to try to get as much onto your exhibit as possible, but this usually makes for a cluttered and confusing display. Try to select only the most important items for your exhibit. If your panels look like the example on the left, there's too much stuff!

Plotting it Out in Advance

It's important to plan out your exhibit in advance. Each section should be labeled. These labels for your title and main ideas are very important because they direct the viewer's eye around your exhibit. Figure out what you want in each section, including drafts of your text and ideas for quotes, photos, and other illustrations. Be sure to lay everything out BEFORE you glue it down.

Exhibits Must Include Credits for All Visual Sources

Students must include a brief credit, on the exhibit itself, for all visual sources (e.g. photographs, paintings, charts, graphs, etc.). They must also fully cite these sources in their annotated bibliography *(See: IV. Individual Category Rules – B. Exhibit, Rule D5, Chapter 6.4, page 33)*

- Keep in mind that a credit will be 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, similar to how a credit appears in a book.
- These brief credits do NOT count toward the student-composed wordcount.

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.

Alice Paul, 1918, Library of Congress

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

A student-written caption does count toward the 500 word

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

TITLE

BACKGROUND

Put your topic into historical context

- What was taking place before or at the same time as your topic?
- What outside forces influenced your topic?
- What else does the viewer need to know?

Build Up

Give more specific information related to your topic than "background". Think of this as the "spark" that set the main event in motion

THESIS

The "HEART OF THE STORY" or "MAIN EVENTS" describe the key details of your topic

- Give the major details about the main events. What happened?
- Include specific details
- This section generally covers a smaller time period

Short Term Impact

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

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!

CATEGORY: DOCUMENTARY

In the documentary category you will create a ten-minute film like the ones on PBS or the History Channel. Two popular technologies used for documentaries are computer-generated slide presentations and digital video presentations. Whichever technology you choose, keep the following in mind:

- Make a storyboard of the types of images you want to use to explain your topic.
- Collect a large number of images to avoid too much repetition. You'll need about 100 images for a ten-minute documentary.
- Use appropriate music as an important addition to your recorded script.
- Write your script or narrative first and then add images.
- Make sure that the script fits with the image on the screen.
- Preview early and re-edit at least once.

Video Presentations

The availability of home video cameras and easy-to-use digital video editing computer software, such as iMovie or Windows MovieMaker, has made this type of documentary the most popular. Here are some suggestions for video presentations:

- Remember: Students must operate the camera and the editing equipment.
- Stay organized. Draw up a storyboard of the scenes you will be shooting.
- Present a variety of panning shots, interviews, original footage, and still photographs.
- Appropriate music is an effective addition to your soundtrack, but remember that the music must match your presentation. Do not let it overshadow the verbal presentation.
- Watch professional documentaries for ideas.
- At events, be sure to test the available equipment so that your DVD works correctly.
- If you are burning your documentary to a disc, make sure you burn the whole video, not just the file!

Computer-Generated Slide Presentations
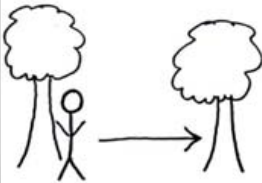
Computer slide-show software programs, such as PowerPoint, provide excellent tools for combining the audio and visual aspects of a documentary. When using computers to develop slide shows, don't rely on screen after screen of text to tell your story. Images driven by a recorded audio track are much more effective than bullet points or text pages. If you plan to run your slide show from a computer, be sure to bring all the necessary equipment with you to the History Day event. They are less common than video presentations.

Storyboards

Regardless of what type of documentary you decide to create, 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 final product.

You can make a storyboard form by creating a three- column table similar to the one shown on the next page.

Label the columns Notes, Visual and Audio. Use the Visual and Audio columns to match your narrative with the images you intend to use to illustrate 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 president 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

It is important to think about breaking up your documentary into smaller segments, just like an exhibit is divided into sections. It will be easier to organize your thoughts into these smaller parts. It's also easier for your viewers to follow along when you have a well-organized documentary. Here are some general ideas about how you may want to organize your documentary.

1 TITLE	2 THESIS	3 BACKGROUND/ BUILDUP	4 MAIN EVENT	5 SHORT & LONG TERM IMPACT	6 CONCLUSION	7 CREDITS

🔊 Track 1: Student read narration etc.

🔊 Track 2: Historically appropriate music and sound effects

1. TITLE – 15 seconds
2. THESIS STATEMENT – 1 minute
3. BACKGROUND/BUILDUP – 2 minutes, 30 seconds
   a. Put your topic into historical context.
   b. Give more specific information related to your topic then just background.
4. MAIN EVENT – 2 minutes, 30 seconds
   a. Give major details about the main events in your topic.
   b. Include specific details about the most critical people and events.
   c. Focused period of time.
5. SHORT AND LONG TERM IMPACT – 2 minutes, 30 seconds
   a. Focus first on what happened immediately after the main events of your topic.
   b. Take a step back and think about the historical significance of your topic.
6. CONCLUSION – 1 minute
   a. Restate Thesis.
   b. Restate Historical Significance.
   c. Relation to theme.
7. END TITLES/CREDITS – 15 seconds

CATEGORY: PERFORMANCE

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

Basic Rules

- No longer than 10 minutes
- Must be an original production
- You must set up the props before your performance by yourself

Research Comes First

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

Develop a Thesis

Even in the performance category, it's important that you are discussing the significance of your topic in history. After you've done your research, develop your thesis before you start planning your performance.

Brainstorm Scenarios

Once you have a thesis, it's your chance to figure out which characters and scenarios will best help you to discuss this for 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: You want to avoid presenting an oral report on a character that begins with when they were born and ends with when they died. Become the historical figure and write your script around an important time or place that will explain your ideas.

Write the Script

The average script for a ten-minute performance is four to five double-spaces pages. Make sure your thesis is clear in your performance, ideally incorporated into the beginning and ending of your performance. Make sure your script contains references to the historical evidence, particularly the primary source material you found in your research. Using actual dialogue, quotations, or taking excerpts from speeches are good ways to put historical detail into your performance.

Practice!
Once you have a solid script you can begin practicing. This will include blocking, memorizing, costumes and set design. Often times the more simple props and costumes are the better. Good costumes help make you convincing, but be sure they are appropriate to your topic. Consult photographs or costume guides if you are unsure about appropriate dress. See examples of historical plays to get ideas about stage movements, use of props, etc.

Remember What's Important
Don't get carried away with props! Content is the most important factor in your performance and any props you use should be directly related to your theme. Props should help you to emphasize the key concepts of your performance. Remember, you only have five minutes to put up and take down your props.

A simple backdrop can be great for costume changes.

Remember: Thesis stated in the intro, supported in the body and restated in the conclusion!

WORKSHEET: PREPARING YOUR PERFORMANCE
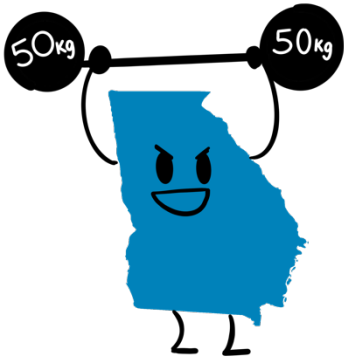
By their very nature, performances are the most creative History Day category. It's impossible to give you a formula for a successful performance. They can take many different formats and will vary based on the number of people, characters, scenarios, and topic. Below are two tools to help you begin brainstorming your performance. Keep in mind that these are not the only successful approaches to the performance category—just a place to get stared. 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

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. Sometimes selecting a different character—maybe someone who wasn't a major player—gives you the chance to take a step back and discuss your topic's significance in history in a different way. Instead of Abraham Lincoln, one of his advisors or aides who lived after his death would give you a more long-term perspective on Lincoln's presidency.

A different character, an observer, allows you to step back and discuss significance in a different way.

CATEGORY: 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 and glamor.

The NHD Website Editor
Students creating a website must built their site using the NHD Website Editor, a free, online web-building tool known as NHDWebCentral. Start at www.nhd.org/nhdwebcentral.

General Technical Specs
- No more than 1,200 visible, student-composed words. This doesn't count words you don't write (such as quotes or words in primary sources). It also does not count recurring menus and titles in the navigational structure of your site.
- Sites can be no larger than 100 MB. The NHD Website Editor will limit you to this amount.
- Your use of multimedia clips may not exceed 3 minutes. It's up to you if you do multiple short clips, or a few longer ones. You may not narrate audio/video clips.
- All visual and multimedia material must include a brief credit on your website as well as be included in your annotated bibliography. These do not count towards your word limit.
- Your process paper and bibliography must be included as an integrated part of your website. They do not count towards your total website word limit.
- See the National History Day *Contest Rule Book* for complete rules. (*NHD Rule Book, Chapter 6.5, pps 33-36)*
- Make sure to publish your website as you make changes!

Research and Planning out Your Website First
It may be tempting to begin using the NHD Website Editor right away, but actually building your website is one of the final steps in your process. You will want to do your research and develop a thesis first. Once you have an idea of what you want to say, **plan your website out on paper.** Decide on the pages you need, how they will be organized, and what sort of supplemental media content you might want to use.

Consider Including...
The most successful websites are more than just a paper on a computer screen. This category gives you the opportunity to share your ideas in a variety of engaging formats, including multimedia clips, images, and primary sources within your website. As you decide which elements to include, remember to only include those that relate most directly to your argument.

Competing with Websites
- After your website is built, be sure to test it on a number of browsers (Internet Explorer, Safari, Firefox, and Chrome) to ensure that it has the visual impact you desire.
- Keep track of your project's assigned web address as you will need this to register.

Example Projects
If you would like to see some examples of other History Day websites, visit www.nhd.org.

Organizing Your Pages

Once you've decided which pages you need on your website, there are several different ways to think about organizing and linking them together. No matter which approach you select, it's important that it makes sense and isn't confusing to viewers.

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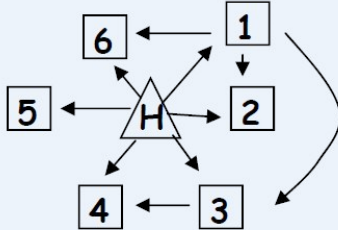
Spider web organization is designed to let the viewer explore the web site in a variety of ways. Since the pages are one level deep, it assumes that information is equally important. Note: Not all pages have to link together

Hierarchical organization is also designed to let the viewer explore the web site in a variety of ways. However, since there are multiple levels of pages, you can organize the more important information to be closer to the homepage and the supporting information to be deeper in the site.
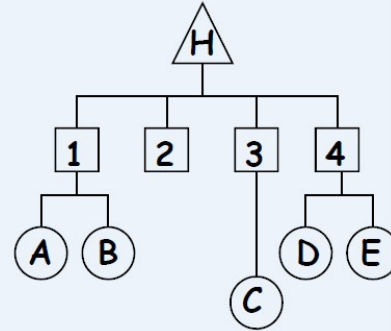
Website Rule Reminders!

Website: Multimedia is Limited to No More than Four Minutes for Entire Website

A website may contain multimedia, audio, video, or both, but the grand total for all multimedia used within the website may total no more than three minutes.

Rather, students have a grand total of four minutes to divide up at their discretion. It is the student's decision to divide up this overall media limit to best provide supporting evidence in their website. (See: IV. Individual Category Rules – E. Website, Rule E5, page 34)

- Please note that any music or song that plays after a page loads is included in this total.
- A website could include many, smaller clips or include fewer, longer clips. The choice is up to the student.

Website: Quotes and Visual Sources Must Be Credited Within Website

Students must include a brief credit, in the website itself, for all VISUAL and WRITTEN sources (e.g. quotes, photographs, paintings, charts, graphs, etc.). They must also fully cite these sources in their annotated bibliography. (See: IV. Individual Category Rules – Website, E6, page 35)

- Keep in mind that a credit will be much briefer than a full citation.
- These brief credits do NOT count toward the student-composed word count.

Begin planning out the pages you need in your website. Each page should directly support your thesis statement. Remember: These are just some beginning ideas. You may want to include more pages, fewer pages, or create subpages on your website. Just keep in mind the ease of navigation for your viewer.

Title

Brainstorm a creative title for your website and write it here.

Navigation

Think about which pages would best support your thesis statement and write them below. Remember—you can add as many or as few pages as you want as long as you're organized.

Thesis Statement

You will want to include your thesis on your homepage, but do not have to label it "thesis". Write your thesis here and use it as a guide to decide which pages you want to include on your website.

HOME/THESIS
BACKGROUND/CONTEXT
LEAD UP
HEART OF THE MATTER
SHORT TERM IMPACT
LONG TERM IMPACT
CONCLUSION/RESTATE THESIS
Process paper/Bibliography

CATEGORY: RESEARCH PAPER
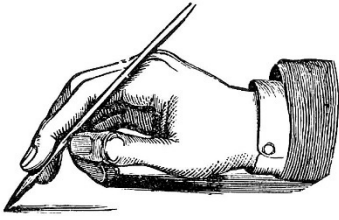
The process of the research paper is similar to the writing of articles and books by college professors. Throughout your schooling, you will be expected to write research papers.

A research paper requires three basic steps.
1. Collection of information.
2. Organization of information.
3. Presentation of the topic in an interesting way.

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

What is a footnote?

Footnotes are explanations provided by writers about ideas or quotations presented in the paper are not their own. Footnotes not only give credit to the originators 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.

How long does this paper have to be?

History Day papers are 1,500 to 2,500 words in length (approx. 6-10 pages). Each word or number in the text counts as one word. The word limit does not apply to: notes, annotated bibliography, illustration captions, and supplemental appendix materials.

Must the paper be typed?

No, but typing is always best, and you may have someone type your paper for you.

Be sure to refer to your Contest Rule Book for more information about title pages, footnote style, and requirements.

PROCESS PAPER AND ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

All students must create and submit additional supporting materials with their projects. All categories must submit an annotated bibliography. All categories except papers must submit a process paper as well.

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
    - **Exhibit**: Include the student-composed word count for the exhibit and the total word count in the process paper
    - **Documentary and Performance**: Include the total word count in the process paper
    - **Paper**: Include the total word count in the paper.
    - **Website**: Include this information on the homepage of your website. Include the student- composed word count for website and the total word count in 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	Name	Name	Senior Division
Junior Division	Junior Division	Senior Division	Individual Documentary
Historical Paper	Group Exhibit	Individual Performance	Process Paper: 410 words
Paper Length: 2,234 words	Student-composed Words: 489	Process Paper: 425 words	
	Process Paper: 410		

Process Paper

Students creating entries in the exhibit, documentary, performance, and website categories must also write a process paper. It is important to do a good job on this part of your entry because it is the first thing that people look at when evaluating History Day entries. The research paper category requires a title page and annotated bibliography, but does not include a process paper.

The process paper is not a summary of the topic, but an essay that describes the process of how the students developed the entry. This paper is no longer than 500 words, usually 4-5 paragraphs addressing:

- How did you get the idea for this topic?

- Where did you go for your research? What types of sources (newspapers, documents, interviews, etc.) did you use?
- How did you put your presentation together? What skills did you learn?
- How does your topic relate to the theme? Why is this topic important 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 short description of each source and how you used it in your entry. A History Day bibliography should be separated in to 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 style guide of the Modern Language Association of America (MLA).

NHD has produced a great set of "Quick Tip" videos on annotated bibliographies. You can view them by visiting NHD's YouTube page!
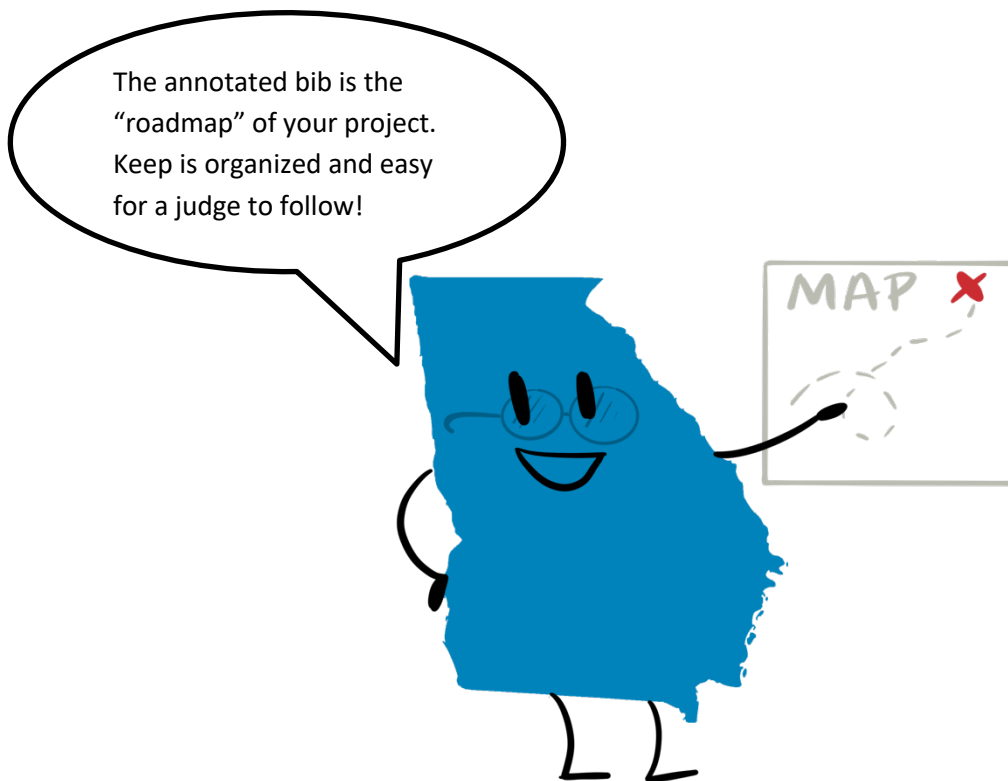
Evaluating National History Day Projects

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 accuracy, analysis and interpretation, historical context, wide research, uses available primary sources, research is balanced. The work clearly relates topic to theme, demonstrates significance of topic in history, draws conclusions, and reflects student voice.

- **20% Clarity of Presentation**: Uses the category effectively to explain ideas.

Rules Compliance: Project follows general guidelines for History Day as well as category-specific rules

Visit
www.lagrange.edu/nhd
to get a better look at a
judge's evaluation sheet!

The Last Word (from/by Judges)

"FOCUS! - NARROW YOUR TOPIC!"

"MAKE A POINT-ARGUE A THESIS"

"HAVE LESS NARRATIVE/MORE ANALYSIS!"

"RELATE YOUR TOPIC TO THE THEME!!!"

"PUT YOUR TOPIC IN ITS HISTORICAL CONTEXT!"

"TELL ME WHY IT MATTERS!!!" SIGNIFICANCE!

"DO ADDITIONAL RESEARCH AFTER EACH CONTEST!"

"FOLLOW THE RULES!"

Image is licensed under

Remember what Mr. History always said:

"Do your research - Have a point - Don't 'junk' it up!!!"