

OHIO

HISTORY DAY

Frequently Asked Questions - Project creation and presentation

What's the theme?

The theme for 2018 is **Conflict & Compromise in History**

[Return to Region 8 webpage](#)

What does theme mean?

The theme is a broad topic to help guide students as they choose what to research. All projects should connect to the theme. Projects not connected to the theme will lose points.

[Return to Region 8 webpage](#)

What are the divisions?

There are two divisions based on what grade the participant is currently enrolled. Junior division is for students in grades 6-8 and Senior division is for students in grades 9-12. Junior and Senior do not refer to your high school ranking.

[Return to Region 8 webpage](#)

What are the project categories?

There are 5 categories: Paper, Documentary, Exhibit, Performance, Website. The Paper category can only be complete by an individual. All other categories can be completed by an individual or a group of up to 5 students.

[Return to Region 8 webpage](#)

How do I choose a project category? (Students and Teachers)

Students – Your teacher may have some rules about what categories you can or cannot participate in so please ask them first. If not consider your strengths and weaknesses. All categories will require you to do research, write, be creative and have some element of interaction and presentation with the judges. Performances involve the most acting and theatrical elements. Documentaries and Websites will require the most technology skills. If you love arts and craft then the Exhibit category might be the one for you. If the written word is your strength then Papers might be a great match. In addition some people work better in groups while others prefer to work as an individual. Don't assume that one is easier than another. Groups can share the work load and include people with different strengths but require large amounts of communication to coordinate duties and information. Working as an individual means you can work at your own pace and use the methods you prefer but all of the work fall on your shoulders.

Teachers – Please keep in mind that the number of paper entries per school per division is limited to 8. This is entirely due to the intense amount of time required by **volunteer judges** to read, make notes and prepare questions **before** the day of the contest. It's very difficult to recruit judges for this category for this reason. If you want your whole school or grade level to create papers for the Ohio History Day contest consider holding a school contest to choose the 8 best overall papers or choose the best from each class period.

[Return to Region 8 webpage](#)

What is a process paper?

A process paper describes how you did your research and created your entry. A process paper is required for every entry except papers. It should be no longer than 500 words and must have 4 sections:

How you chose your topic.

How you conducted your research.

How you selected your presentation category and created your project.

How your project relates to the National History Day theme.

Samples of process papers are available [online at the National History Day website](#).

[Return to Region 8 webpage](#)

How do I write my paper/process paper/ bibliography?

The best way is to do it as you go. That means keeping track of where every piece of information and quote came from. One system is to use notecards. On one side of the note card write all the required bibliography information. (See *Annotated Bibliography Instructions* under the *Worksheets* section.) On the other side write down the notes that apply to your topic. They don't have to be complete sentences. For each new piece of information put it on a different notecard, even if it's from the same source. If you copy something word for word make sure you put it in parenthesis so you know it's a quote.

When you think you have all the information you need, organize your note cards into piles with information that goes together. Then take each pile and put them in an order that makes sense for your topic. This is a paragraph or section of your paper! Now turn your notes into sentences. Repeat with each pile of notes to have a complete paper.

[Return to Region 8 webpage](#)

Is the 500 word limit in an exhibit category separate from the 500 word limit for the process paper?

Yes, the title page, process paper, and bibliography are considered as being separate from the exhibit and do not count towards the 500-word limit for the exhibit itself.

[Return to Region 8 webpage](#)

Can you have pictures in a paper, like illustrations, graphs, etc.?

Illustrations are acceptable. Captions do not count in the word total. Make sure that illustrations are directly related to the text, and don't overdo them. The people who volunteer as paper judges tend to be quite text-based, and they're probably not going to be impressed by excessive illustrations.

[Return to Region 8 webpage](#)

Can I use a fictional 1st person in a paper or performance?

Yes. At the beginning of the Category Rules for papers in the National History Day Rule Book, there's a description of papers: "A paper is the traditional form of presenting historical research. Various types of creative writing (for example, fictional diaries, poems, etc.) are permitted, but must conform to all general and category rules. Your paper should be grammatically correct and well written." The rules state, "A performance is a dramatic portrayal of your topic's significance in history and must be original in production." A performance is not simply an oral report or a recitation of facts. You can make up characters to make a broader historical point, but don't make up history. While performances must have dramatic appeal, that appeal should not be at the expense of historical accuracy.

Therefore, it is possible to have fictional characters, for example, writing a fictional diary. However, you need to make sure that you cite sources just as you would for a traditional paper or in a performance. Most importantly, it still has to be historically accurate. You can make up the character, but the circumstances and events of the character's life and which that character witnesses or participates in should be based on historical facts.

[Return to Region 8 webpage](#)

What is a primary source?

Primary sources are materials directly related to a topic by time or participation. These materials include letters, speeches, diaries, newspaper articles from the time, oral history interviews, documents, photographs, artifacts, or anything else that provides contemporary accounts about a person or event.

Some materials might be considered primary sources for one topic but not for another. For example, a newspaper article about D-Day (which was June 6, 1944) written in June 1944 would be a primary source; an article about D-Day written in June 2001 probably was not written by an eyewitness or participant and would not be a primary source. Similarly, Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, delivered soon after the 1863 battle, is a primary source for the Civil War, but a speech given on the 100th anniversary of the battle of Gettysburg in 1963 is not a primary source for the Civil War. If there's any doubt about whether a source should be listed as primary or secondary, you should explain in the annotation why you chose to categorize it as you did.

[Return to Region 8 webpage](#)

Are interviews with experts primary sources?

No, an interview with an expert (a professor of Civil War history, for example) is not a primary source, UNLESS that expert actually lived through and has first-hand knowledge of the events being described.

[Return to Region 8 webpage](#)

If I find a quote from a historical figure in my textbook or another secondary source and I use the quote in my project, should I list it as a primary source?

No, quotes from historical figures which are found in secondary sources are not considered primary sources. The author of the book has processed the quotation, selecting it from the original source. Without seeing the original source for yourself, you don't know if the quotation is taken out of context, what else was in the source, what the context was, etc.

[Return to Region 8 webpage](#)

Should I list each photograph or document individually?

You should handle this differently in notes than in the bibliography. When you are citing sources for specific pieces of information or interpretations, such as in footnotes or endnotes, you should cite the individual document or photograph. In the bibliography, however, you would cite only the collection as a whole, not all the individual items. You should include the full title of the collection (e.g., Digges-Sewall Papers or the Hutzler Collection), the institution and city or city/state where the collection is located (e.g., Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore). You can use the annotation to explain that this collection provided 7 photographs which you used in your exhibit or that collection provided 14 letters which were important in helping you trace what happened. The same treatment applies to newspaper articles. In the footnotes or endnotes, you should cite the individual articles and issues of a newspaper. In the bibliography, you would list only the newspaper itself, not the individual issues or articles; you can use the annotation to explain that you used X number of days of the newspaper for your research.

[Return to Region 8 webpage](#)

How many sources should I have for my annotated bibliography?

We can't tell you a specific number of sources, as that will vary by the topic and by the resources to which you have reasonable access. For some topics, such as the Civil War or many 20th-century US topics, there are many sources available. For other topics, such as those in ancient history or non-US history, there likely are far fewer sources available. The more good sources you have, the better, but don't pad your bibliography. Only list items which you actually use; if you looked at a source but it didn't help you at all, don't list it in your bibliography.

You do need to find both primary and secondary sources. Secondary sources help you to put your topic in context, that is, to see how your topic relates to the big picture and to understand its long-term causes and consequences. Primary sources help you develop your own interpretation and make your project lively and personal.

As much as possible, your research should be balanced, considering the viewpoints of all relevant groups. That means different perspectives, different genders, different nations, different socioeconomic/ethnic/religious groups, etc. What balanced means will vary depending on your topic.

[Return to Region 8 webpage](#)

What is a style guide?

A style guide is a rule book for how to format your paper. It tells you everything from the size of your margins, to the order information should be listed in your bibliography. National History Day projects should follow one of two style guides. Either style is acceptable as long as you use it consistently for all parts of your project. The two style guides are MLA and Chicago. Find links to each of these style guides under the section *HISTORY DAY RESOURCES For Students*.

[Return to Region 8 webpage](#)

What will judges evaluate me on?

Judges will evaluate you on three main areas. See *Frequently Asked Questions – Judging* for more details about these three areas.

- Historical Quality (60%)
- Relation to Theme (20%)
- Clarity of Presentation (20%)

Judges will also check that you have complied with the rules. Rule infractions are not grounds for disqualification but can be taken into consideration during the final rankings. See *Frequently Asked Questions – Judging* for more details on infractions and disqualification.

[Return to Region 8 webpage](#)

What do I need to bring to the judging session? (Student, Teacher, Judge)

Students – The type of project you created determines what you need to bring. Judges and event staff cannot provide you with any additional supplies so please remember to bring everything you may need. In addition to all the items listed below always remember a positive attitude and a smile!

Documentary: Your documentary must be submitted digitally before the contest. On the day of the event bring three copies of your title page, process paper and bibliography. Computers, projectors and internet connection will be provided in each classroom. Event staff will do their best to have the documentaries loaded onto a flash drive however we highly suggest students bring a copy of their documentary on their own flash drive as a backup.

Exhibit: Three copies of your title page, process paper and bibliography as well as your exhibit. The Region 8 event coordinators cannot provide media devices for exhibits but you can bring your own if it enhances your exhibit. It's highly suggested the electronic devices run off battery power as we cannot guarantee access to electricity.

Paper: Your paper and annotated bibliography must be submitted digitally before the contest so judges can read it prior to the event. On the day of the event bring one copy of your paper and annotated bibliography with you.

Performance: Three copies of your title page, process paper and bibliography as well as any costume or prop. The Region 8 event coordinators cannot provide media devices for performances but you can bring your own if it enhances your exhibit. It's highly suggested the electronic devices run off battery power as we cannot guarantee access to electricity.

Website: Your website must be completed and locked before the competition. Bring the link to your website written out on paper in case the site is not already loaded on the computer in the room. Three copies of your title page, process paper and bibliography for the judges. Computers, projectors and internet connection will be provided in each classroom. Event staff will do their best to have the web links for each participant already on the computer.

Teachers – Teachers do not really need to bring anything to judging sessions. Students are expected to bring everything they need to judging. Take this opportunity to enjoy the months of work you and the students have put into this project.

Judge – Judges don't really need to bring anything! We will provide you with copies of the forms, pencil, pens, breakfast and lunch. A good amount of patience and passion will definitely make the judging experience for you and the students much more enjoyable.

[Return to Region 8 webpage](#)

Is the answer to your question missing from this page?

Be sure to check out the other FAQ pages as well as the other links and resources listed on the Ohio History Day Region 8 event page. If you still can't find it email the Region 8 coordinator, Chantal Hayes, at chayes@cincymuseum.org

[Return to Region 8 webpage](#)