

National History Day Research Project – Teachers Lesson Guide

This is meant to be a guide to resources that COULD be used in the classroom. All dates and worksheets should be edited to meet the need of your students. All worksheets referenced in this guide can be found on the Region 8 webpage at <http://www.cincymuseum.org/content/ohio-history-day>

Step 1- Review the rules and theme for this year’s National History Day competition. – Each year the NHD organization releases a theme book which contains the theme narrative, a sample topics list, articles and much more. In addition the organization may revise or clarify certain rules and procedures.

See: www.nhd.org/themebook
www.nhd.org/rulebook or www.nhd.org/rulebookspanish

Step 2 – Decide how your students will participate – You will need to decide how much your students get to choose about the aspects of this project. It’s up to each teacher to decide what works best for their students and what will meet the goals of the school and district. Will your students be able to choose any category or will they all be creating the same type of project? Will they get to choose how they work or will everyone work as an individual/student chosen group/assigned group? Can they choose any person, organization or event from history that fits in this year’s theme or will they need to focus on a certain time period in history?

Keep in mind that due to various constraints Ohio Region 8 limits the number of entries in the paper category to 8 entries per school per division. If you want all your students to write papers have a school contest to determine the top 8 or choose the best from each class period. Ohio Region 8 has the right to limit the number of entries in other categories. If you have concerns about the number of submissions from your school please contact the regional coordinator.

Step 3 - Introduce National History Day to your class – September – There are a lot of creative ways to introduce this project to students. The *Introduction for Students* worksheet can be used as a syllabus for the class, a checklist for the project or a way to acquaint students with the idea of National History Day.

See: Introduction for Students

Step 4 - Select a category and topic – Early October - Students must choose a topic that is historically important, relates to the theme of the contest, and one in which they have a genuine interest. Sometimes there are special awards for topics dealing with local or state history. If students in a group find they aren’t interested in the same topics now is the time to readjust. Similarly, if students in a group disagree on the category they want to use to present the topic they should consider other options.

See: Choosing a Topic Worksheet / Topic Proposal Form
How do I choose my category

Step 5 – Narrow your topic– Mid October - For example, the Pony Express is an interesting phenomenon that was an innovative approach to transcontinental mail service. However, the topic of the Pony Express in general is very broad. Students should consider what made the Pony Express innovative and explore its legacy to American history to focus the research. Narrowing the topic is essential to a successful History Day project!

See: How to write a Thesis Statement

Step 6 – Research – October through December - This is the longest phase of the project, and will continue from October through December. There are wide varieties of resources available for students to begin their quest. Beginning with Secondary Sources will provide Historical Context, may assist them in narrowing their topic even further, and guide them toward Primary sources relevant to their topic.

A helpful hint about *Quality Research*: **Use credible sources.** Experts in the field write credible sources. They are peer reviewed and fact checked. If students have questions about their source's credibility, they need to investigate further! This is especially important when using information collected from the internet!!! *Always* complete a website evaluation *before* using a website. When evaluating websites keep in mind:

- Who wrote, published, and maintains the site? Does it contain copyrighted material?
- What is the purpose of the site? Does it contain factual information or ONLY opinion?
- Is it easy to navigate?

NOTE: This evaluation process applies to ALL sources used for their project!!! BE CRITICAL!

See: Research – Where to Look, How to Look and Sources.

Step 7 - Developing an annotated bibliography – October through December – This step should be done at the same time as they are researching. Students need to develop a system to track and categorize their research. Notecards are a great introduction for middle school students, but note sheets are also an effective tool. The same system could be replicated in Microsoft Word documents or through NoodleTools as well.

The relevant information would allow students to direct someone else to that source or to complete a bibliographic reference:

- Author or Editor
- Publisher
- Year of publication or copy-right
- City of publication
- Title of book or journal, include issue and volume numbers when applicable
- Title of article
- Page numbers
- Hosts and URL addresses for websites

Annotations should include:

- What is the purpose of the publication?
- What types of information that can be found in this source?
- Is this source a primary or secondary source? How can you tell?
- How did you or will you use this source?

NOTE: Annotated bibliographies are REQUIRED for ALL projects.

NOTE: Annotated bibliographies should contain sources from various locations. High school students could be required to do some research out of school –community and college libraries, museums, etc. Internet sources are legitimate, provided they can be authenticated. Wikipedia, about.com, and other “general knowledge” sources are not legitimate resources.

See: History Day Note Card or History Day Note Sheet

Annotated Bibliography Instructions

Annotated Bibliography Phase 1, Phase 2, Phase 3, Final

Step 8 – Research Analysis Sheets - There are two suggested research checkpoints built into the calendar. On a research checkpoint, students need to turn **five research analysis forms**. Each sheet needs to contain the appropriate citation and follow the instructions accordingly.

See: Research Analysis Checkpoint 1 and 2

Check Point: **Late October** - Research Analysis Checkpoint 1

Early December - Research Analysis Checkpoint 2

Step 9 – Interviews – October through December - Encourage students to reach out for interviews. Require proof that they have attempted to contact the previously approved expert or person involved in their event.

See: Expert Interview Plan Checkpoint 1 and 2

Check Point: Late October – Expert Interview Plan Checkpoint 1

Mid December – Expert Interview Plan Checkpoint 2

Step 10 – Registration – December to Deadline – Registration to participate in the regional competition typically opens in early December. Check out the Ohio Region 8 page or the Ohio State History Day page to find out the exact dates. Registration needs to be completed by teachers as a way of allowing event organizers to double check which students are associated with your school and ensure no one is missed. Every project needs to be registered. Students who are working as an individual will need to register themselves. Students who are working as part of a team will need to complete registration for the group, but will provide contact information about every individual in the group. Teachers and students should receive a confirmation that they have registered.

See: Frequently asked Questions

Registration Links

OHD Region 8 page

Check Point: Students must forward confirmation mail to teacher/ print out their confirmation email.

Step 11 – Final product – January to Regional Competition – Students should begin to create their product using all the information and resources they have gathered. If students have used notecards to record their research they can organize the cards into the message they want to convey in their project. From this outline they can write a full length script or paper, create the content for each page on their website or begin to construct their exhibit.

See: Checklists for each category with possible judge interview questions

Step 12 – Submission

State Qualifiers – Students who qualify to attend the State competition are encouraged to use the notes from the judges evaluation to make improvements to their projects. Students need to register and submit their project for the state competition following that events process.

Important Dates: (visit the Region 8 page for this year’s details)

Region 8 Ohio History Day Competition at:

Registration deadline:

Submission deadline:

Ohio History Day Competition at:

Registration deadline:

Submission deadline:

National History Day National Competition at the University of Maryland, College Park

This resource was created by the National History Day organization with help from the following teachers and organizations.

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