NHD
NATIONAL
HISTORY DAY

Judging Instructions:
WEB SITE

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a judge for the National History Day (NHD) Program. You will be judging the web site category. Some of our finest young historians have labored for months preparing their entries and are eager to share their outstanding historical research and conclusions with you.

PURPOSE OF JUDGING

The goal of NHD is to provide young people with a high quality educational experience—whether or not they win a prize. Fair and effective judging is essential. Your evaluations are important to the students who advance to the next round, since your comments help them revise their entries. Most students, however, will not advance. Your feedback is even more important for them, since it is the only thing that they will take home. It is critical that your interactions with the students be fair, helpful, and positive. Your spoken and written comments are fundamental to making the History Day contest a learning process.

JUDGING PROCESS

NHD relies on consensus judging. That means that instead of giving entries numeric scores, you will be ranking them. You will be assigned to a team of 2 or 3 judges, one of whom will be designated the captain. It is important that everyone on your team agrees on the overall rankings of the entries you judge. Unlike most other categories, web site judging is accomplished largely before the contest.

Before the Contest: Read the judging instructions and theme information carefully. You will receive a judging packet which includes directions for accessing the web sites, hard copies of the title pages, process papers and annotated bibliographies for each project, and evaluation forms. Explore each web site and write preliminary comments on the evaluation forms and print-outs, which will be returned to students. See the sections below entitled, "Evaluating Entries" and "Writing Comments."

If possible, meet with your other team members before the contest to discuss the web sites, review the comments you have written, and reach a preliminary consensus about rankings. It is usually easiest to start by deciding which entries to eliminate. It may also be very clear that certain entries stand out as the best, although it usually takes some compromising to achieve consensus on how to rank the top entries. Be sure to note any rule violations and decide how that should affect your rankings. Your contest coordinator will provide you with information about how your contest handles web site judging.

Orientation: Attend the judges' orientation at the contest. The judging process will be discussed in more detail and you will be provided with other important information. You will receive a judging packet which includes your team's evaluation schedule and other contest forms.

Judging: A few minutes before judging is scheduled to begin, go to the web site interview room. Interviews are scheduled at 15-minute intervals. Only the students being interviewed are allowed in the room with the judges. While you may discuss any aspect of the web site, be sure to use the interview to clarify any questions you have about the research or any possible rule violations. Please keep to the schedule.

After Interviewing All the Students: After all the interviews, return to the judges' room. Your first task will be to determine if the interviews have changed your preliminary rankings. As with other categories, the web site should stand on its own; interviews should only affect the rankings if you have discovered a rule violation or if the interview helped clear up any misunderstanding you may have had. You also should consider whether the written materials—the process paper and the bibliography—are clear and organized. The team captain should then fill out the judges' ranking form; then all the judges on your team should sign the form. Double-check that you completely filled out the evaluation forms. You also should consider whether the written materials—the process paper and the bibliography—are clear, organized, and well done. Do not be carried away by glitz; simpler is often better. Conversely, do not discount an entry or assume students had outside assistance simply because a web site is of high visual and production quality; many students achieve both superior production quality and superior historical quality.

RULES COMPLIANCE

There is no specific deduction for rule violations, but be sure that all of the judges note them on the evaluation forms. Keep these principles in mind when you are deciding how to handle rule violations:

• Major violations are those which give an entry a **substantial advantage** over other entries. These include plagiarism, reusing an entry from a previous year, or having unauthorized outside assistance. Only plagiarism and reusing an entry should result in disqualification, while other major violations should result in **lower rankings.** If you have an entry that you believe should be disqualified, inform the contest coordinator and allow them to handle it.

• Minor violations are those which can be **easily remedied** and which **do not confer a competitive advantage.** These include using the wrong file name in the root directory, putting the school name on the home page, exceeding the file size limit solely because of a failure to compress multimedia or reduce image resolutions, using inconsistent citation formats, etc. Minor violations can be treated with some leniency, especially at the local level, where judges may choose

to simply note them without imposing a penalty. At the national level, enforcement of the rules should be stricter, since students should be familiar with the rules and any transgressions should have been caught at the local and state level. At all levels, if two entries are otherwise equal in quality, the **entry with fewer violations should be rated more highly.**

WRITING COMMENTS

In addition to rating each of the areas on the evaluation form, you must write comments. The evaluation forms are a teaching tool, and the comment section allows you to explain to students in a constructive way the ratings they earned and suggest how they might do better next time. **You must write positive and constructive comments.**

Tips for Writing Comments:
• Be positive. Find something to praise. Most of the students have worked hard on their entries, and you want to encourage them to try again.
• You should point out any major flaws in an entry, but couch your criticisms in positive terms, such as: "You might think about doing X this way..." "Another source you might find helpful is…" "A simpler background (or fewer decorative animations, etc.) would make your site more visually appealing." "Having a similar layout on each page of your site would make it easier for your audience to navigate." "Adding an introduction that includes your thesis and main points would help your viewers understand the intent and structure of your web site." "It was clear from the interview that you understood the historical significance of your topic, but you need to convey that in your web site."

GENERAL RULES

Students must adhere to the following rules when developing their entries:

Annual Theme: An entry must be clearly related to the annual theme and explain the topic's significance in history.

Interpretation:
• Entries that do not relate to the theme at all should not win, since adherence to the theme counts as 20% of the overall score.
• Students will sometimes stretch the boundaries of the theme in order to pursue a topic that particularly interests them. An example is a student doing "Pickett's Migration at the Battle of Gettysburg" for the theme "Migration in History." If a topic is only tangentially related to the theme, judges should take that into account when evaluating the entry.

Here is a copy of the evaluation form you will use

- If an entry is merely descriptive and does not analyze the topic's causes and consequences, the judges should take that into consideration when ranking it.
- While entries should be clearly related to the annual theme, **they often do not need to address every aspect of the theme.** For the 2004 theme, "Exploration, Encounter, Exchange," students could examine exploration OR encounter OR exchange; they did not have to include all three. However the 2007 theme, "Triumph and Tragedy," presented a different challenge. Triumph and tragedy are often intertwined: what appears to be a triumph from one perspective might look like a tragedy from another. Since students are to consider all appropriate perspectives, most entries that year addressed BOTH triumph and tragedy. In a few cases, however, it was acceptable to focus on one OR the other, rather than both.

Contest Participation: Students may participate in the research, preparation, and presentation of **only one** entry each year.

Individual and Group Entries: Group and Individual entries will compete against each other in one category.

Development Requirements: Entries submitted for competition must be researched and developed during the current contest year that begins following the national contest each June. **Revising or reusing an entry from a previous year—whether a student's own or another student's—is unacceptable and will result in disqualification.**

Construction of Entry: Students are responsible for the research, design, and creation of their own entries. They may receive help and advice from teachers and parents on the mechanical aspects of creating their entries: (1) typing the process paper and other written materials; (2) guidance from their teachers as they research and analyze the material, but their conclusions must be their own; (3) photographs and slides may be commercially processed.

Interpretation:
- Students entering as individuals should do all of their research themselves and not share research or bibliographies with other students. In cases where students have shared research with other entrants, it is appropriate for the judges to reduce their final ranking.
- Students may receive **reasonable** help from adults on the mechanical aspects of creating their entries. Nonetheless, students should do as much of the mechanical work as possible.
- The intellectual aspects of the production, such as the actual composition of text and the web site design, must be the student's own work.
- It is up to the judges to decide, when appraising an entry, if adult assistance has exceeded acceptable levels and given the students an unfair advantage over others.
- Advice and guidance is encouraged and acceptable.

Discussion with Judges: Students should be prepared to answer judges' questions about the content and development of their entries, but they may not give a formal, prepared introduction, narration, or conclusion.

Costumes: Students in the web site category are not permitted to wear costumes that are related to their topic during judging.

Interpretation:
• If you suspect students are wearing costumes, ask them before imposing a penalty. Students sometimes wear ethnic clothing that judges mistake for costumes.

Title: Entries must have titles that are clearly visible on all written materials. One page of the web site must serve as the "home page." The home page must include the student's name, entry title, division, and a main menu that directs viewers to the various sections of the site.

REQUIRED WRITTEN MATERIAL FOR ALL ENTRIES

Title Page: A title page is required as the first page of written material in every category. The title page must include only the title of the entry, the name(s) of the student(s) and the contest division and category. Note: The title page must not include any other information (pictures, graphics, borders, school name or grade) except for that described in this rule.

Annotated Bibliography: An annotated bibliography is required for all categories. It should contain all sources that provided usable information or new perspectives in preparing the entry. Students will look at many more sources than they will actually use. **They should list only those sources that contributed to the development of their entries.** Sources of visual materials and oral interviews must be included. The annotations for each source must explain how the source was used and how it helped the students understand their topics.

Separation of Primary and Secondary Sources: Students are required to separate their bibliographies into primary and secondary sources.

Interpretation:
• While many sources clearly fall into one category or the other, some sources can be either, depending on how they are used. In those questionable cases, the student should explain in the annotation why they classified that particular source as primary or secondary.
• If judges disagree with the categorization of a source as primary or secondary, they should ask about it during the interview and allow the students a chance to explain their rationale.
• If judges have doubts about the validity of an Internet source or its classification as primary or secondary, they should ask about it during the interview.

Style Guides: Style for citations and bibliographic references must follow the principles in one of the following style guides: (1) Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* or (2) the style guide of the Modern Language Association of America (MLA). **Regardless of which manual is used, the style must be consistent throughout the project.**

Interpretation:
• If judges at the district/regional or state level believe the style is incorrect or that it is used inconsistently, they should note that in their written comments, being as specific as possible, so that students can make corrections.

Process Paper: Entries in all categories except historical papers must provide copies of the following written materials: (1) A title page. (2) A description of no more than 500 words explaining how the students conducted their research and created and developed their entries. They must conclude their description with an explanation of the relationship of their topics to the contest theme. (3) An annotated bibliography. **These materials must be typed or neatly printed on plain white paper and stapled together in the top left corner. They should not be enclosed in a cover or binder.**

Interpretation:
• The process paper should not summarize the students' research but should instead explain how they conducted the research and developed the entry. It should also explain the relationship of their topic to the theme.
• While the rules provide specific directions regarding the type of paper and fonts to use, failure to observe these requirements is a minor violation. The judges should note the noncompliance on their comments, but they should not downgrade an entry on this basis.

Plagiarism: Students must acknowledge in their annotated bibliographies all sources used in their entries. **Failure to credit sources is plagiarism and will result in disqualification.**

CATEGORY RULES: WEB SITE

Viewing Web Sites: Judges must view web sites in a recent version of a standard web browser (i.e. Microsoft Internet Explorer, Firefox, or Safari). Students are responsible for ensuring that the entry is viewable in multiple web browsers. Entries may not link to live or external sites, except to direct viewers to plug-ins.

Size Requirements: Web site entries may contain no more than 1,200 visible, student-composed words. Code used to build the site, and alternate text tags on images do not count toward the word limit. The word limit does not include words found in materials used for illustration such as documents, artifacts or graphs not created by the student, or quotations from primary sources such as oral history interviews, letters, or diaries, photos of artifacts with writing, or other illustrative materials such as reoccurring menus, titles and navigation instructions that are used as an integral part of the web site. Brief text crediting the sources of illustrations or quotations included on the web site do not count toward the 1,200-word limit. The entire site, including all multimedia, may use up to 100MB of file space.

Interpretation:
- The word limit only applies to student-composed words; that is, it does not apply to documents, oral history quotations, artifacts with writing, or other illustrative materials that are used as an integral part of the web site.
- Brief citations of quotations, visual materials, or multimedia do NOT count toward the word limit.
- Links (e.g. www.wisconsinhistory.org) and dates (e.g. January 1, 1960) each count as one word. Words in names are counted separately (e.g. Franklin D. Roosevelt counts as three words).
- If judges suspect a web site exceeds the word limit, they may ask the contest coordinator to have someone count the words.
- If a web site uses only a few words or kilobytes of file space more than the maximum AND the judges believe the extra content provided no qualitative advantage in terms of the amount of interpretation or evidence included, then the judges may choose to note the infraction without reducing the entry's final ranking.
- If a web site exceeds the size limit by more than a few words or kilobytes of file space AND the judges believe the extra content gave the entry an unfair advantage, the judges should reduce the entry's final ranking. At the state level, such an entry should not be a medalist.

Navigation: One page of the web site must serve as the "home page" with the file name "index." The home page must include the names of participants, entry title, division, and a main menu that directs viewers to the various sections of the site. All pages must be interconnected with hypertext links. Automatic redirects are not permitted.

Multimedia: Each multimedia clip may not last more than 45 seconds and may not include student composed narration. There is no limit to the number of multimedia clips other than the file size limit. Voiceover of material not composed by students is allowed. If an entry uses any form of multimedia requiring a plug-in (for example, Flash, QuickTime or Real Player), you must provide on the same page a link to an Internet site where the plug-in is available as a free, secure, and legal

download. Judges must make every effort to view all multimedia content. If you have difficulty viewing a multimedia clip, please contact the contest coordinator.

External Links: Entries may not link to live or external sites, except to direct viewers to plug-ins.

Stable Content: The content and appearance of a page may not change when the page is refreshed in the browser. Random text or image generators are not allowed.

File Safety: Entries that contain potentially harmful file contamination (e.g. a virus or worm) are subject to disqualification. The files will be scanned with virus detection software before being distributed to judges.

Bibliographic Sources: The annotated bibliography must be included as an integrated part of the web site. It should be included in the navigational structure and does NOT count toward the 1,200-word limit.

Entry Production: All entries must be original productions. Students may use professional photographs, graphics, video, recorded music, etc. within the site. Such items must be integrated into the web site and proper credit must be given within the site as well as in the annotated bibliography. Students may not use objects created by others specifically for use in their entries. Students must operate all software and equipment in the development of the web site.

THANK YOU AND HAVE FUN!

A B C ● C L I O *Schools*

National History Day

0119 Cecil Hall

University of Maryland

College Park, MD 20742

301-314-9739

info@nhd.org

www.nhd.org