

## History Day Judging Tips

**Your job as a History Day judge is to evaluate student entries on the basis of historical quality and depth, demonstration of the relationship between topic and the theme, and effectiveness of presentation.**

### Judging Ratings

Rather than using point ratings, History Day evaluates entries in relative terms of “Good,” “Excellent,” or “Superior”. There are no points assigned to the different evaluation columns. The aim is to remove the confusion related to assigning numerical scores to subjective decisions. Instead, the students can focus upon how the judges have identified the relative merits or areas for improvement of the entry. This should not disrupt the judging process; in fact, some people may find it simpler to judge without having to be concerned with point values. The judges are simply asked to rank their selections according to the criteria.

### Oral Interaction...

At the end of each presentation you will have the opportunity to ask students questions about their entries. Use this opportunity to inquire about the decisions they made in developing their project, the roles of group members, their understanding of the subject and/or the theme, or any other topic that will help you evaluate their work. Try to avoid suggestive commentary when talking to students and reflect these ideas in your written comments.

### Written Comments...

The key to History Day judging is to provide positive, but critical, evaluations of each entry. Begin your comments with the most positive feature of the entry. Critical comments are best phrased as suggestions (e.g. “You may want to...,” “Did you consider...,” or “Other issues important to this topic are...”). Any constructive commentary is valuable for the students, but this is especially important for State Finalists who can change their entries using your suggestions.

You do not need to make detailed comments on your judging form at the time you evaluate an entry, but you should make enough notes about the primary strengths and weaknesses of an entry to allow you to evaluate it more completely later.

### Final checklist for a History Day entry:

- **Does this student’s work demonstrate historical research and scholarship?**
- **Does the student make an argument about the impact of their turning point in history? (Remember that students’ views and understanding may differ from your own. Consider the strength of their points rather than their beliefs.)**
- **Is this student communicating his or her ideas in an organized and effective way?**
- **Has this student done careful and reasoned work?**