



History Day Categories

You can take part in one of five project categories. In the Documentary, Exhibit, Performance and Website categories, you can work as an individual, or in a group. The Paper category is the only one where you work independently.

Documentary

Documentaries present information about an event, person, place or idea from the past through a ten minute presentation that showcases documents, images, photographs, and actual footage of the topic you are researching. Your documentary needs to have both primary and secondary research but also be an original production.

A documentary should reflect your ability to use audiovisual equipment to communicate your topic's significance, much as professional documentaries do. The documentary category will help you develop skills in using photographs, film, video, audiotapes, computers, and graphic presentations. Your presentation should include primary materials but must also be an original production. To produce a documentary you must have access to equipment and be able to operate it.

Exhibit

Historical exhibition presents information about an event, person, place, or idea from the past by physically displaying documents, images, or objects. We often see such exhibits at museums, but they are also presented at many other places such as archives, historic sites, park visitor centers, classrooms, and even airports and train stations.

For your National History Day project, you will tell the story of your research through historic photographs, maps, drawings and other interesting objects. An exhibit is a visual representation of your research and interpretation of your topic's significance in history, much like a small museum exhibit. The analysis and interpretation of your topic must be clear and evident to the viewer. Labels and captions should be used creatively with visual images and objects to enhance the message of your exhibit.

Paper

History papers present information and analyze an event, person, place or idea from the past in writing. Although you might attach a map, chart or photograph that you refer to in your paper, you will rely mainly on words. Writing a paper is a chance to tell what you know and what you think about a part of the past.

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.

Performance

A performance is a live, dramatic presentation of your topic's significance in history. You may perform individually or as part of a group. A performance should be a scripted portrayal based on research of your chosen topic.

Your script should be structured on a thesis statement, supporting statements, and a conclusion. Your performance should have dramatic appeal, but not at the expense of historical information. A performance is a dramatic portrayal of your topic's significance in history and must be original in production.

Website

A historical web site is a collection of web pages, interconnected with hyperlinks, that presents primary and secondary sources, interactive multimedia, and historical analysis. Your web site should be an accumulation of research and argument that incorporates textual and non-textual (photographs, maps, music, etc.) description, interpretation, and multimedia sources to engage and inform viewers about your chosen historical topic.

The web site category is the most interactive of all NHD categories. Therefore, a web site should reflect your ability to use web site design software and computer technology to communicate the topic's significance in history. Your historical web site should be a collection of web pages, interconnected by hyperlinks, that presents primary and secondary sources, interactive multimedia, and historical analysis. It should incorporate textual and non-textual (photographs, maps, music, etc.) descriptions, interpretations, and sources to engage and inform viewers.

To construct a web site project, you must be able to operate, and have access to, the Internet, appropriate software and equipment.

Be sure to consult the Rule Book for more information about each category.

For further History Day information, please contact Mark Vessey at 360-586-0219 or mark.vessey@wshs.wa.gov.