



EXHIBIT CATEGORY: JUDGING CRITERIA AND RULES

PURPOSE OF JUDGING

NHD's goal is to provide young people with a high quality educational experience—whether or not they win a prize. It is critical that your interactions with the students be fair, helpful, and positive. Your spoken and written comments are fundamental to the learning process.

YOUR PROCESS

1. Review all materials sent to you in advance of the contest.
2. Attend the contest-day orientation.
3. With your team, review each entry's process paper and annotated bibliography, then view the exhibit. Conclude by interviewing the student(s).
4. Return to judging headquarters to deliberate, reach consensus, complete paperwork and write thoughtful, constructive comments.

EVALUATING EXHIBITS

An exhibit is a visual representation of the students' research and interpretation of their topic's significance in history. The analysis and interpretation of the 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 the exhibit. Some exhibits will be dazzling, using a variety of fonts, high-quality graphics, sophisticated mounting, and expensive boards. Regardless of how polished the exhibit may be, the most important aspect is its historical quality.

No matter how impressively the students handle themselves during the interview, remember that the entry itself should be able to stand alone. Answers to questions should not overshadow the material presented in the entry.

JUDGING CRITERIA

Historical Quality – 60%

This is by far the most important factor in judging an exhibit. It refers to the research, analysis, and interpretation of the topic. The exhibit should be historically accurate. It should not simply recount facts but interpret and analyze them; that is, the entry should have a strong thesis or argument. In addition, it should place the topic into historical context—the intellectual, physical, social, and cultural setting.

The entry also should reflect historical perspective—the causes and consequences of an event, for example, or the relationship of a local topic to larger events. The best entries will use a variety of both primary and secondary sources and will consider multiple viewpoints (e.g., those who suffered as well as those who benefited, males and females, people from different racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic groups, etc.) as appropriate to the topic.

Primary sources are materials directly related to a topic by time or participation. These materials include letters, speeches, diaries, contemporaneous newspaper articles, oral history interviews, documents, photographs, artifacts, or anything else that provides first-hand accounts about a person or event. This definition also applies to primary sources found on the Internet. A letter written by President Lincoln in 1862 is a primary source for a student researching the Civil War era. An article about the Vietnam War published in 2001 and not written by an eyewitness or participant about his or her experience is not a primary source. An interview with an expert (a professor of Vietnamese history, for example) is not a primary source UNLESS that expert actually lived through and has firsthand knowledge of the events being described. Primary materials such as quotes from historical figures or photographs of historical events, when found in secondary sources, can be used effectively in NHD projects; however, these are not considered primary sources.

Relation to the Theme – 20%

The entry must clearly relate to the annual theme and demonstrate why the topic is significant in history.

Do not confuse fame with significance. Local history topics may not be well known but may represent larger trends or events. The exhibit should draw conclusions about the topic's significance. In other words, the entry should answer

the questions, “So what? Why was this important?” It should not be just descriptive.

Clarity of Presentation – 20%

This relates to the entry’s appearance and overall presentation. Is the exhibit well organized? Are the title, sectional divisions, and main points easy to discern? Are photographs and other images appropriate in terms of content and location? Do they have clear captions? Is the overall appearance cluttered or pleasing to the eye? You also should consider whether 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 an exhibit is of high visual and production quality; many students achieve both superior production quality and superior historical quality.

CONTEST RULES

These are the rules to which all students must adhere in developing their entries. Please note the difference between a simple violation of these rules and a disqualifying offense:

Rule Infraction: A violation of any of the rules stated in the *Contest Rule Book*. Judges will take any rule infractions into consideration in their final rankings. Failure to comply with the rules will count against the entry but will only result in disqualification as indicated below.

- Major violations are those which give an entry a substantial advantage over other entries, for example, significantly exceeding time requirements, word limits, and size requirements or having unauthorized outside assistance (e.g., someone else operating editing equipment, etc.). Major violations should result in lower rankings.
- Minor violations are those which can be easily remedied and which do not confer a competitive advantage, for example, putting the school name on the title page, exceeding time requirements by a few seconds, using inconsistent citation formats, etc.

Disqualification: Removal of an entry from competition. A project may be disqualified from the contest on three grounds:

1. Plagiarizing.
2. Reusing, individually or as a group, a project (or research from a project) from a previous year
3. Tampering with any part of the project of another student.

If you feel an entry has reason to be disqualified, please contact the contest official.

GENERAL RULES

Annual Theme: An entry must clearly relate to the annual theme and explain the topic’s significance in history.

- Entries that do not relate to the theme at all should not win.
- If a topic is only slightly related to the theme, you should take that into account when evaluating the entry. An example would be “Pickett’s Migration at the Battle of Gettysburg” for the theme “Migration in History.”
- Take consideration in ranking, if an entry is merely descriptive and does not analyze the topic’s causes and consequences.
- While entries should clearly relate to the annual theme, they often do not need to address every aspect of the theme. For the theme, “Rights and Responsibilities,” students could examine rights OR responsibilities; they do not have to include both, though one often leads to the other when fully explored.

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 exhibit category are not permitted to wear costumes that are related to their topic during judging.

- If you suspect students are wearing costumes, ask them before imposing a penalty. Students sometimes wear ethnic clothing that may be mistaken for costumes.

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), the contest division and category, and applicable word counts. A title page for an entry in the exhibit category must include the count of student-composed words found on the exhibit as well as the word count for the process paper.

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.

- 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 you disagree with the categorization of a source as primary or secondary, ask about it during the interview and allow the students a chance to explain their rationale.
- If you have doubts about the validity of an Internet source or its classification as primary or secondary, ask about it during the interview.

Process Paper: Entries in all categories except historical papers must provide a description of no more than 500 words explaining how the students chose their topics, conducted their research, created and developed their entries, and the relationship of their topics to the contest theme.

- The process paper should not summarize the students' research but should instead explain how they conducted research and developed the entry.

CATEGORY RULES: EXHIBITS

Size Requirements: The overall size of the exhibit when displayed for judging must be no larger than 40 inches wide, 30 inches deep, and 6 feet high. Measurement of the exhibit does not include the table on which it rests; however, it does include any stand that is supplied by the students and any table drapes. Circular or rotating exhibits or those meant to be viewed from all sides must be no more than 30 inches in diameter.

- If an exhibit is only slightly larger than allowed AND you believe the extra space provided no qualitative advantage in terms of the amount of material included or its visual impact, then you may choose to simply note the infraction on the evaluation sheet without reducing the exhibit's final ranking.
- Please note the violations of the size requirement on the evaluation sheets.

Word Limit: A 500-word limit applies to all student-composed text that appears on, or as part of, an exhibit entry. This includes the text students write for titles, subtitles, captions, graphs, timelines, media devices, or supplemental materials (e.g., photo albums, scrapbooks, etc.) where students use their own words. Brief factual credits of the sources of illustrations or quotations included on the exhibit do not count toward the 500-word limit.

- If you suspect an exhibit exceeds the 500-word limit for student-composed written materials, you may ask an official to have someone count the words.
- A date (January 1, 1903) counts as one word. Each word in a name is individually counted, for example, "John Quincy Adams" is three words. Words such as "a," "the," and "of" are counted as one word each.
- Direct quotations from primary and secondary sources and brief, factual credits do not count as student-composed words.
- If an exhibit substantially exceeds the word limit, AND you believe it gained an unfair advantage from the additional words, you should reduce that entry's final ranking.
- Please note violation of the word count limit on the evaluation sheets.

Crediting Sources: All quotes from written sources must be credited on the exhibit. All visual sources (e.g., photographs, paintings, charts, and graphs, etc.) must be credited on the exhibit and fully cited in the annotated bibliography. Brief, factual credits do not count toward the word total.

Media Devices: Media devices (e.g., DVD players, tablets, mp3 players, video monitors, computers, etc.) used in an exhibit must not run for more than a total of three minutes. Quotes from another source (e.g., clip from a documentary, primary source music, etc.) are considered quotes. Any student-composed questions, narration, or graphics incorporated within a media presentation are subject to the 500-word limit. Viewers and judges must be able to control media devices. Any media devices must fit within the size limits of the exhibit