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

EVALUATING POSTER
The Poster is a scaled-down version of the exhibit category. This entry category is available only to participants in the Elementary Division.   A Poster provides the opportunity for students to demonstrate their understanding of the topic and theme, effectively use a combination of quotations and their own words to share the context, their thesis statement and evidence that supports it, and the significance of the topic in history. Students will use images of all kinds (e.g., photos, maps, art images, etc.) and meaningful captions to tell their story and guide the viewer through the display. Each Poster includes a process paper and annotated bibliography.

No matter how impressively the students handle themselves during the interview, the entry itself must 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 a Poster. It refers to the research, analysis, and interpretation of the topic. The Poster 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 firsthand 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 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 poster 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 Poster 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 that 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 that can be easily remedied and that 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: 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, 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, 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 Poster 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.

Title: Entries must have titles that are clearly visible on all written materials.

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 Poster category must include the word count for the process paper.

Annotated Bibliography: Students are only required to annotate 5 of their sources in the Poster category. Students who annotate more are not to be given an advantage over those who do not. 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.

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: Poster

Size and Shape: The Poster will be a rectangle no larger than 30" x 40" in size. It may be oriented either as portrait or landscape.

Construction: The project must be flat. It will contain no protruding elements. The display backing may be cardboard, mat board, poster board, foam board, or other flat material. Students may attach flat paper items to the display backing.

Word Limit: A limit of 350 words applies to all text created by the student included in the Poster. This includes the text written for titles, subtitles, captions, graphs, and timelines where students use their own words. Brief citations crediting the sources of illustrations or quotations included on the exhibit do not count toward the 350 student-composed word limits. This word limit does not apply to the process paper and annotated bibliography.

Poster Display Checklist
- ✓ Rectangular in shape and no larger than 30" x 40"
- ✓ Flat
- ✓ Does not exceed 350 student-composed words
- ✓ Minimum of 4 copies of written materials
    - Title page with entry title, name(s), division (Elementary), and category (Poster)
    - Process Paper no longer than 500 words
    - Annotated bibliography separated into primary and secondary source sections
- ✓ Uses images, labels, captions, and text to create a display with visual impact and tell an interesting story to the viewer
- ✓ Shows interpretation and analysis
- ✓ Places topic in historical context and is historically accurate
- ✓ Demonstrates wide research and use of primary sources
- ✓ Project reflects balanced research (multiple perspectives on the topic)
- ✓ Shows the connection between the topic and the theme
- ✓ Explains why the topic is significant in history