

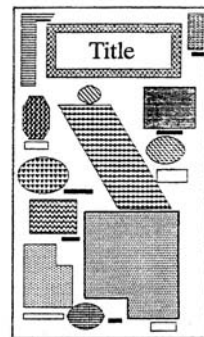
PART TWO

PRESENTATION

Once you have completed your research you need to design an effective entry for your category. Each category is described in this guide along with some basic suggestions and design approaches. Keep in mind, the historical paper category is only open to individual entries. Exhibits, performances, and media presentations may be created as individual or group entries. Also, the suggestions presented here are not complete, they are only a starting point. Use your creativity and imagination to make your presentation stand out!

The second part of this guide offers suggestions on how to present your research in one of the following History Day categories:

- Historical Paper
- Exhibit
- Performance
- Media Documentary





CHOOSING A CATEGORY

When selecting a category it is important to consider the following:

- Which category best fits your interests and skills *(or the talents of group members)?*
- Will you have access to the equipment or materials you need to present your entry? *(This is especially important for media presentations!)*
- Does your research fit one category better than another? *(For example, do you have enough pictures for an exhibit?)*

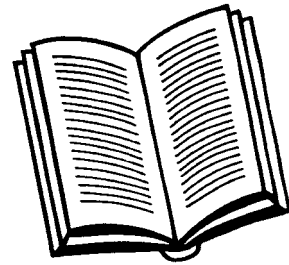
Once you have selected a category try to look at examples created by other students. This may help give you ideas about the best way to present your topic. Your own creativity, in combination with good research, will make your presentation stand out.

Keep in mind that the most important part of any entry is its historical quality. Avoid getting so caught up in the production or creation of your project that you lose sight of the importance of historical quality. Judges are not looking for glitzy productions; rather they are looking for solid research and a thorough analysis of the chosen topic.

The History Day Contest Guide

After choosing your category be sure to consult the History Day Contest Guide for complete information on the rules that relate to your entry. The Contest Guide will also describe the judging criteria for evaluating History Day entries. It can be found at:

<http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/teachers/historyday/>





SUGGESTIONS FOR EACH CATEGORY

Papers

The process of the historical research paper is similar to the writing of articles and books by college professors. Throughout your schooling, you will be expected to write articles.

A research paper requires three basic steps:

1. Collection of information
2. Organization of information
3. Presentation of the topic in an interesting way.

There are many books available on how to write research papers and you may find it helpful to look at one or more of them before you begin. Ask your history or English teacher to suggest some useful guides. Here are some of the most common questions about research papers.



What is a Footnote?

Footnotes are a writer's explanations that ideas or quotations presented in the paper are not their own. Footnotes not only give credit to the originators of ideas, but also serve as the historical "evidence" in support of your ideas about the past. Usually footnotes occur in three situations:

- Quoting a Primary Source—An example of this would be including a selection from a speech or interview.
- Quoting a Secondary Source—If you take a direct quotation from someone's book you must footnote it.
- Paraphrasing a Secondary Source—Even if you change an author's ideas into your own words you must footnote where you found this information.
- Placing Footnotes—While placing citations in parentheses in the text is permissible according to the MLA style rules, many readers prefer citations as footnotes at the bottom of the page because they do not interrupt the flow the text there. Most word processing programs can place your footnotes on the bottom of the page for you.

How Long Does This Paper Have to Be?

History Day papers are 1,500 to 2,500 words in length (*approx. 6-10 pages*).

Must the Paper be Typed?

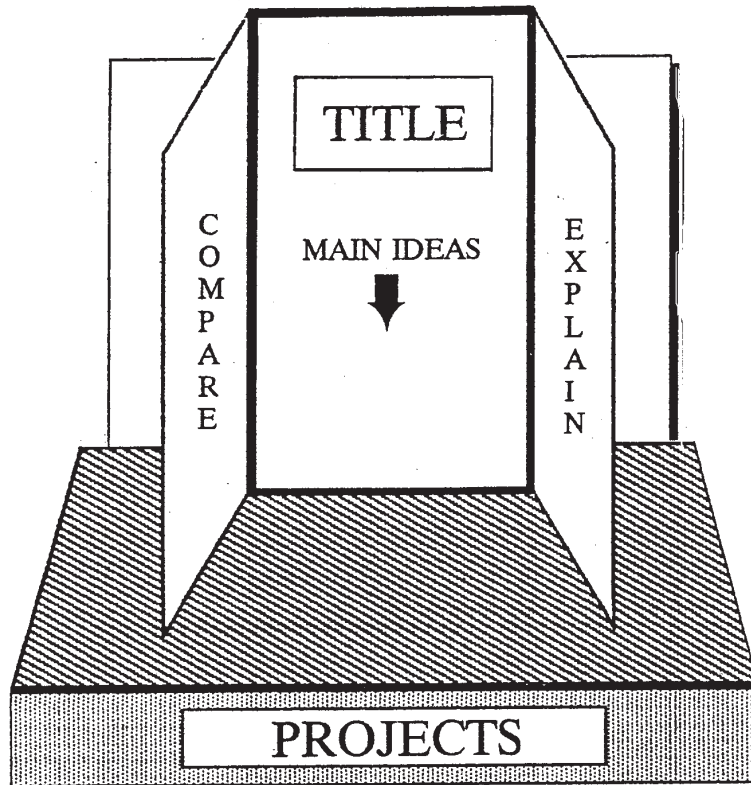
No, but typing is always best and you may have someone type your paper for you.

Be sure to refer to your *Contest Guide* for more information about title pages, footnote style, and entry requirements. Good Luck!



Exhibits

Exhibits are designed to display visual and written information on a topic in an easy to understand and attractive manner. Exhibits are not simply collections of material, however. They are carefully designed to tell a story and make an interpretation. To be successful, an exhibit must create an effective balance between visual interest and historical explanation.



After you finish with your research, try making an outline of the main arguments and points you would like to make in your exhibit. This outline will help organize your ideas as you lay out your actual exhibit.

The most common form of exhibit entry is a three-panel display similar to the above illustration. This style is the least complicated to design and build, but is still a very effective way to present your information. Here are some tips for this style:

- Be sure your title is the main focus of the center panel.
- Also use the center panel to present your main ideas.
- The side panels are best used either to compare issues about your topic or explain related details.
- If your topic is presented in chronologically, make sure the sequence works visually on the panels.
- You have a limited number of words, use them sparingly and let the quotations, documents, artifacts, drawings, and photographs demonstrate your thesis.
- Artifacts or other materials may also be placed on the table between the side panels.

A Note on the Quote:

- Quotations can be an effective way of using historical evidence to support your argument. Sometimes, a quote from the historical figure just says it better than you could say it yourself.
- Only original words (i.e. words written by you) count toward the word limit, so quotations do not take away from your 500 words. Quotations should not, however, be used just to “get around” the word limit. Using quotations this way and covering your exhibit with tons of quotes can easily make your exhibit cluttered and overwhelming for the viewer. Your own argument, analysis, and interpretation can get lost and these are important aspects of your History Day project that you want to stand out. It is important, therefore, to make sure that there is a reason for everything you put up on your exhibit and that it is all well organized.

More Hints About Exhibit Projects . . .

Labeling



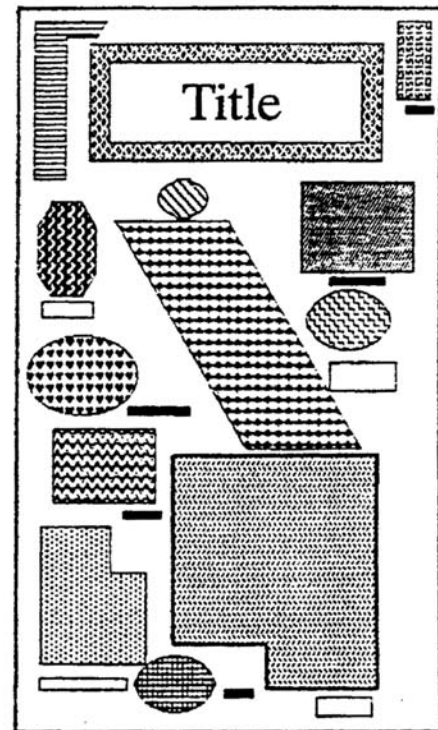
The labels you use for your title and main ideas are very important because they direct the viewer's eye around your project.

One way to make your labels stand out is to have the writing on a light colored piece of paper with a darker background behind it. This can be done with construction paper, tag board, or mat board. Dark black lettering makes your labels easier to read.

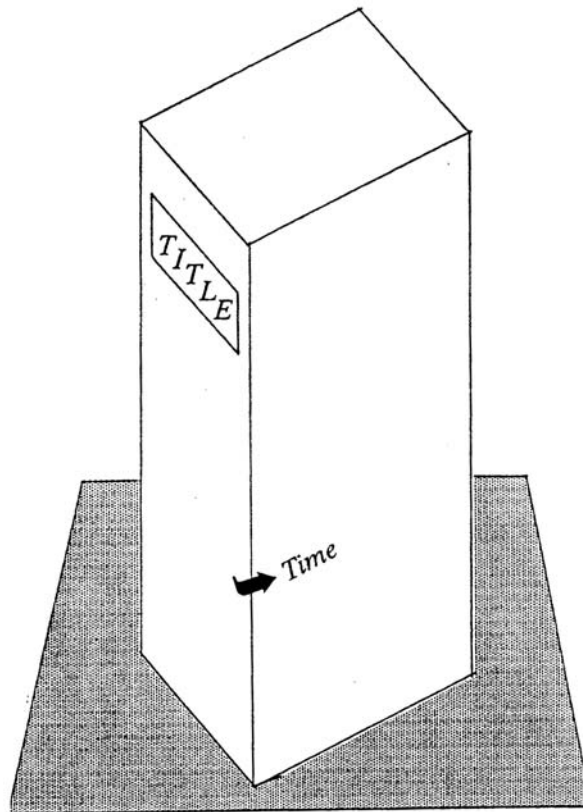
Photographs and written materials will also stand out more, if you put them on backgrounds as well.

Although you will be able to explain your project during the initial judging, a successful project entry must also be able to explain itself. This makes it important that you design your project in a way that your photographs, written materials and illustrations are easy to understand and to follow. It is always tempting to try to get as much on your panel boards as possible, but this usually makes for a cluttered and confusing display. Try to select only the most important items for your project boards. Clarity and organization are the most important goals for this project.

Project Design



Three-Dimensional Exhibit



A three-dimensional exhibit is more complicated to construct but can be especially effective for explaining topics where change over time is important. Like the three-panel display, one side should contain your title and main theme. As you move around the exhibit the development of your topic can be explored. It is not necessary for the project itself to be able to spin. You may set it on a table (or the floor) so people can walk around it.

When making a three-dimensional exhibit, good organization is especially important. Because your exhibit has so many sides, viewers may be more easily confused about how to follow your exhibit's narrative. Make sure that each side is clearly labeled, cleanly organized and that there is a good, logical flow as the viewer moves about your exhibit.



Performances

The performance category allows you to create a historical play. Entries in this category must have dramatic appeal, but not at the expense of historical information. Creativity is the key here, and students must make effective use of their 10 minute time allowance. Innovative performances have made this category the highlight of many History Day events!

Here are some suggestions:

- Good research is the key. You may have a strong story or play in mind, but complete your research before jumping right in and writing your script.
- When you do write your script, make sure it contains references to the historical evidence, particularly the primary source material you found in your research. Using actual dialogue, quotations or taking excerpts from speeches are good ways of putting historical detail into your performance.
- Think about ways to show your argument (thesis statement) through your script. By creating dynamic characters and writing good dialogue, your performance can take a stand on a historical topic and support it effectively.
- Be careful of presenting an oral report on a character which begins with when they were born and ends with when they died. Become the historical figure and write your script around an important time or place, which will explain your ideas.
- Don't get carried away with props! Content is the most important factor and any props you use should be directly related to your topic. Props should help you to emphasize the key concepts of your performance. Remember, you only have five minutes to put up and take down your props.
- Good costumes help make you convincing, but be sure they are appropriate to your topic. Consult photographs or costume guides if you are unsure about appropriate dress. Old Sears and Montgomery Ward catalogs from the appropriate time period can also be helpful.
- Spend some time "getting into your character's head," whether you're portraying a real or fictional person. What does he or she think about events in his or her time period? What kinds of social behavior would someone from your character's time and situation display? What is his or her personality like?
- See examples of historical plays to gather insights into stage movements, use of props, etc.
- Learn your lines well, so that you can present your character convincingly.
- Practice! Practice! Practice!



Media Documentaries

If you enjoy technology and are able to use computers and editing equipment at home, school, or elsewhere, documentaries may be for you. With the increasing popularity and availability of computer-based video editing software like Apple iMovie, Adobe Premiere, and Windows Movie Maker, more and more students are creating TV-style videotape documentaries. PowerPoint slideshows are also allowed, although students who create slideshows will need to put extra effort into designing a presentation that combines visual images and recorded narrative effectively. **The key to any effective documentary is a good combination of visual and audio narrative.**

Here are some general ideas to keep in mind:

Creating the Project

- **WHEN REGISTERING FOR A HISTORY DAY EVENT, PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO THE TECHNOLOGY THAT WILL BE AVAILABLE.** All event facilities will have TVs and VHS VCRs, but not all of them will have DVD players or ready laptop connections and very few will have computers available.
- Remember—you must operate the camera and the editing equipment.
- Make a storyboard of the types of images you want to use to explain your topic and the scenes you will be shooting. This will keep you organized. Try to present a variety of panning shots, interviews, live action, and still subjects.
- Middle school students can check to see if they can use their high school's equipment.
- Your school or home computer may have video-editing software, such as Apple iMovie, Adobe Premiere, or Windows Movie Maker. Check with your teacher to see if your school offers classes on how to use programs like these.



Finding Resources

- Take pictures from books to build your image collection and avoid too much repetition. Digital cameras work very well for this. If you are scanning the images, make sure they are clear and save the images in the appropriate format. This is especially important when making a PowerPoint presentation to avoid long delays in loading large picture files for each slide.
- If you do research at an archive, explain your History Day project to the archivist and ask about the archive's digital photography policies in advance. You may be able to capture excellent images of documents, photographs, and other sources this way. Be aware, however, that you may need to fill out an extra form or pay a fee to use a digital camera in an archive.

Finishing Touches

- Appropriate music is an important addition to your recorded narrative, but make sure your narrative can still be heard clearly. The audio narrative is one of the most important parts of your documentary!
- Preview early to make sure that you tape works correctly and that the background music does not overpower the audio narrative.

