



*Creating a
Successful
Project for*

NHD
NATIONAL
HISTORY DAY

Creating a Project for National History Day Overview

Introduction:

Using lessons centered on the following six steps, your students will learn to create a successful **National History Day** project from beginning to end.

The **Overview** can be used as a quick review for your students or you can use the six steps to guide students through the process of researching and creating a **National History Day** paper or project. For more detailed information for each step, create transparencies of the handouts or worksheets to use during the class review. A checklist with room for teacher comments is also included to help students complete their project and provide teachers with an easy tool to monitor student progress.

Objectives

TEKS: Grade Level Social Studies Skills

TAKS: Social Studies Objectives for Grades 8, 10, & 11 Exit Level

Objective 5: The Student will use critical-thinking skills to analyze social studies information.

Time: 1-6 class periods to review and conduct research. The project should take 3-6 weeks to complete.

Step 1. Define the Theme and Choose a Topic

Key Concept: Using problem solving strategies, define the NHD Theme, find interesting topics and make a decision on who to work with on the project.

A. Defining the Theme

1. Review and discuss the current NHD Theme.
2. Ask students to rewrite the theme in their own words.

B. Choosing a Topic

1. Complete the Topic Selection Worksheet. (See Sample)
2. Relate student's topic to the current NHD Theme.

C. Choose your partner or group.

1. Choose wisely.
2. Divide the work.

Step 2. Locate Information on Your Topic

Key Concept: Students review where to find various sources for the **National History Day** project, including both primary and secondary sources.

A. Primary Sources vs. Secondary Sources (See Worksheet)

1. Primary Source: A document, photograph, eyewitness account, artifact, etc., created during a specific time period.
2. Secondary Source: A description or interpretation prepared by people who were not involved in the events. A textbook, reference book, etc. describing a person, event, etc.

B. List places in your local community where you can locate information on your topic.

1. School library
2. Houston Public Library
3. Museums

C. Internet Sources

1. Most sites ending with .edu, .org, .gov
2. The National Archives and Records Administration (www.archives.gov)
3. The Library of Congress (www.loc.gov)
4. University of Houston Digital History (<http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/>)
5. Texas A&M, SAGE Internet site (http://sage.tamu.edu/grades/grades_menu.asp)
6. University of Texas Library's Perry-Castañeda Map Collection (<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/>)
7. The Handbook of Texas Online (www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online)

Step 3. Information: Scan it, Evaluate it, Read it, & Store it!

Key Concept: Students will review tips on how to scan and evaluate their sources and create a strategy for storing notes on their project.

A. Scan it: a quick overview of the source.

1. Review any structural aids, such as titles, boldfaced headings, vocabulary, discussion questions, and illustrations.
2. Make a prediction about what you will learn and it will help you remember important information.
3. Does the information fit your topic?

B. Evaluate it:

1. Does this provide necessary information related to your topic?
2. Is the information from a reliable source?
3. If the answer is **NO** to either one of these questions, you must choose another source.

C. Read it: get to know your source.

A *One-Sentence Summary* will help you remember the source.

1. Read it.
2. Reread it and make notes of main ideas and essential concepts.
3. Write a one-sentence summary from your notes.
4. Share the summaries with your partner or group. List at least 3 details from each source.
5. Use sticky notes to mark important information in the text.
(Adapted from CRISS).

D. Store it:

1. Graphic Organizers – see handouts in Step 3.
2. Note Card System.

Step 4. Write the Process Paper (You may want to provide the handouts in Step 4 as a guide.)

Key Concept: Students will write a “process paper” explaining how they chose their entry, conducted their research, selected their category, and how their project relates to the NHD theme.

A. Explain how the entry was chosen.

B. Explain how the research was conducted.

C. Explain why you chose this particular category.

D. Outline the steps necessary to complete your project.

E. EXPLAIN HOW YOUR PROJECT RELATES TO THE THEME.

F. Write the Annotated Bibliography.

Step 5. Select the presentation category and design/outline the product.

Key Concept: Students will draft a design for their project.

A. Select your category (See **Rules Card, Rules for all Categories**)

1. Paper
2. Exhibit, Individual or Group
3. Performance, Individual or Group
4. Documentary

B. Create the product or performance.

1. Draft a design
2. List materials needed
3. Put project together
4. Finish your **Process Paper** (500 word limit).
5. Complete your Annotated Bibliography.

Step 6. Evaluate Your Project

Key Concept: Students will use the **NHD** Judging Criteria Sheet to evaluate their product.

1. Historical Quality (60%)
2. Relates to theme? (20%)
3. Clarity of presentation? (20%)
4. Rules compliance? Although there are no points deducted for not following the rules, failure to turn in an annotated bibliography or a process paper can exclude a project from moving on to the next stage, or making an "A".

Notes

National History Day Student Project Check List

Name(s) _____ Class _____ Date _____

Directions: In the first column, write the date the assignment is due to the teacher. In the second column, students place a check mark next to the completed item. In the third column, the teacher denotes the grade for each item completed.

A: Completed assignment
C: Partially complete

B: Missing some information
D: Incomplete

Due Date	Student	Teacher
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Step 1. Define the theme and choose a topic.

- | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|--|
| _____ | _____ | _____ | 1. Define the theme in your own words. |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | 2. Topic Selection Worksheet. |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | 3. Your topic: _____ |

Teacher Feedback:

Step 2. Locate information on your topic.

- | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|---|
| _____ | _____ | _____ | 4. Individual or group? Group Members: _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | 5. Possible Sources Worksheet. |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | 6. Primary vs. Secondary Sources Worksheet. |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | 7. List two or more places you can go to find information of your project. |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | 8. List two or more primary sources you can use on your project.
Include title and author. |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | 9. List two or more secondary sources you can use on your project.
Include title and author. |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

Teacher Feedback:

Due Date Student Teacher

Step 3. Information: Scan it, Evaluate it, Read it, & Store it!

- | | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|----------------------------|--------------------|
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 10. Notes – first source. | Primary/Secondary. |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 11. Notes – second source. | Primary/Secondary. |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 12. Notes – third source. | Primary/Secondary. |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 13. Notes – fourth source. | Primary/Secondary. |

Teacher Feedback:

Step 4. Write the Process Paper

- | | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|--|--|
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 14. Worksheet: Writing a Process Paper. | |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 15. Outline of your process paper. | |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 16. Annotated Bibliography – List Primary sources first, then secondary sources. | |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 17. Project topic relates to the theme. | |

Teacher Feedback:

Step 5. Select the presentation category and design/outline the product.

Circle the presentation category.

- | | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 18. Outline of historical paper | Draft of design of exhibit |
| | | | Storyboard for documentary | Script for performance |

Teacher Feedback:

Step 6. Evaluate Your Project.

- | | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|---|--|
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 19. Peer Evaluation. | |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 20. Student(s) self evaluation. What grade would you give your project? | |

Teacher Feedback:

Creating a Project for National History Day
Step 1. Define the Theme and Choose a Topic

Objectives

TEKS: Grade Level Social Studies Skills

TAKS: Social Studies Objectives for Grades 8, 10, & 11 Exit Level

Objective 5: The Student will use critical-thinking skills to analyze social studies information.

Time: 1 class period

Concept Development

Key Concept:

Using problem solving strategies, define the **NHD** Theme, find interesting topics and make a decision on who to work with on the project.

Introduction:

5 minutes

1. Define the word **theme**, (the main idea), on the board.
2. Have student's list themes to the following movies: **Sleeping Beauty, Snow White, and Cinderella.**
3. In all three movies, a handsome prince rescues the "damsel" in distress. Each story is different, but the theme is the same.
4. Like the example above, the **National History Day** has a theme with many different ways to illustrate it.
5. Explain to students they will define the current **NHD's** theme, explore possible topics, and choose to work independently or with a partner or group on their project.

Student Instruction:

15 minutes

1. On the chalkboard or overhead project, write out the current **NHD** Theme.
Ex: **NHD** Theme 2005: *Communication in History: The Key to Understanding.*
2. Tell students to think for 1 minute about the word *communication* and write every word they can think of associated with it.
3. Find out who has the most words and have that student read their list. Write the responses on the overhead or chalkboard. Instruct students add any words to their list they did not have.
4. Go to the next theme word and continue to get additional words until all key words are listed.
5. Brainstorm words or ideas associated with the key words. Tell students to think outside the box, in other words, think creatively.
6. Review a current list of suggested **NHD's** topics with students.

Student Practice:**20 minutes**

Explain to students to think about a topic that they are interested in studying.

1. Distribute **National History Day Topic Selection Worksheet**.
2. Have the class complete the first 3 questions: “Name”, (note: Inform students that they will have time to choose partner or group later.) “This year’s **NHD** theme” and “My/our general area of interest”.
3. Instruct students to brainstorm topics they are interested in studying and write them on the back of their paper. Their choices may include topic ideas from the **NHD**’s list.
4. From their list, instruct students to choose 1 area of interest to study.
5. Based on their interest, instruct students to write a sentence explaining their “Preliminary topic idea”. Explain that their idea may change significantly as they conduct their research and learn more about their topic.
6. Brainstorm questions. Students are to write down at least three questions that they have thought about their topic as it relates to the current **NHD** theme. An examples of a good question starter is:
What impact did _____ have on _____?

Homework:

1. Students are to complete **National History Day Topic Selection Worksheet**.
2. Finalize decision to work independently or with a partner or group. Remind students to choose wisely – a partner or group members who will contribute to the project.

Assessment:**5 Minutes**

As an exit pass, have students write an explanation of how their topic relates to the **NHD** theme.

Closure:**5 minutes**

Remind students that their topic must relate to the theme.

Resources:

- See www.nationalhistoryday.org for **NHD**’s Theme
- **National History Day Sample Topics**
- **National History Day Topic Development Worksheet**

Creating a Project for National History Day
Step 2. *Locate Information Your Topic*

Note: This lesson is intended as a review for students.

Objectives

TEKS: Study Skills

TAKS: Social Studies Objectives for Grades 8, 10, & 11 Exit Level

Objective 5: The Student will use critical-thinking skills to analyze social studies information.

Time: 1 class period

Concept Development

Key Concept:

Students review where to find various sources for the National History Day Project, including both primary and secondary sources.

Vocabulary:

primary source, secondary source

Note: It will be helpful if you can schedule time in the library for the second part of the class period so that students can practice locating sources for their projects. If the library is not available for students, schedule time in the computer lab for online research.

Introduction:

5 minutes

Ask students the following questions:

1. Where do you go to find your favorite brand tennis shoe?
2. How do you find it at the store? (Look for the style and shoe size, etc.)
3. Would you prefer a brand name shoe or a copy of the brand name shoe? Why? Discuss student responses, probing for reasons for their choice.
4. Finding sources for you project is very similar. You have to know where to go and how to find the sources when you get there. In general, for history fair projects, it is better to have an original or primary source. Just like students might prefer an original shoe instead of the discount brand.

Student Instruction:

20 minutes, total

(10 minutes) Using the handout **Primary vs. Secondary Sources**, instruct students to answer the first three questions on their own. Then, have the students pair up with a partner to share and discuss their answers. Review the student's answers in a short class discussion. To make sure students have a correct, clear understanding of primary and secondary sources, answer the remaining questions as a group. Remind students that a primary source is not where you find most of your information.

(10 minutes)

Handout **Possible Sources**.

1. Read and fill in the blanks in **Column 1**.
2. Read and fill in the blanks in **Column 2**. Review how to locate books using a card catalog in the library of your school or the Houston Public Library. See the handout **Dewey Decimal Classification System** for helpful tips on where to find books on your topic. For example, books with the call number 900-999 are about history and geography.
3. Read and fill in the blanks in **Column 3**. Demonstrate how to use the connections at the Houston Public Library to their card catalog at <http://www.hpl.lib.tx.us/hpl/>

Student Practice:

20 minutes

Now that students have a topic in mind and a refresher on finding sources, instruct them to find at one or more sources in their school library using either the computer or the card catalog. To make it more interesting, give bonus points for finding a primary source on their topic.

Homework:

Instruct students to find 2 additional sources at their local library or other places mentioned earlier in class. Students will need to bring their sources to the next class.

Assessment:

5 minutes

Instruct students to write an exit pass, listing the source(s) they found, including the title and author. For bonus points, ask students to categorize their sources as either primary or secondary.

Closure:

5 minutes

Finding both primary and secondary sources is just as easy as finding good shoes. A primary source is an original product created during the time of the event. For example, Anne Frank wrote in her diary during the time she and her family were hiding from the Nazis. The local library is a good place to start when you are looking for both primary and secondary sources. The Internet is also a good place to find primary and secondary sources, but make sure the site is credible.

Resources:

- **Primary vs. Secondary Sources**
- **Possible Sources**
- **The Dewey Decimal Classification**

Primary vs. Secondary Sources

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

1. What makes history real?
2. How do we know an event happened?
3. What evidence is there to support historical events?
4. A primary source is _____.
5. A secondary source is _____.

List 5 possible primary sources:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

List 5 secondary sources:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Circle those sources above that could be both primary and secondary.

Possible Sources

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Possible Sources.

List any additional sources you think will be helpful to your project. After you have completed your list, place a P (for primary), S (for Secondary), or B (Both) next to each potential source.

_____ **Reference Books**

_____ **Magazines**

_____ **Almanacs**

_____ **Encyclopaedias**

_____ **CD ROMs**

_____ **Interviews**

Where are they?

List places in your community that you can go to find sources for your project. A few have been listed to get your started.

- **Your school's library**
- **Houston Public Library**
- **University Libraries** (UH, TSU, HCC, Rice, HBU, UST, Prairie View A&M, Texas A&M, UT, etc.)
- **The Texas Room** (HPL)
- **Museums**
- **Video stores**
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Internet Sources.

List any additional web sites you think might be helpful in your quest for sources.

- **Most sites ending with: .edu .org .gov**
- **Be selective of sites ending in .com – the information may be biased.**

For primary sources, check out the following:

- **National Archives and Records Administration** (great for photos!)
- **The Library of Congress**
- **The Smithsonian Institution**
- **History Education Sources**
- **The Handbook of Texas Online**
- **Additional Search Engines:**
-
-

The Dewey Decimal Classification System

When the card catalog gives you the book's call number, you can find that book in this section of your library.

- 000 Generalities**
- 100 Philosophy & psychology**
- 200 Religion**
- 300 Social sciences**
- 400 Language**
- 500 Natural sciences & mathematics**
- 600 Technology (Applied sciences)**
- 700 The arts**
- 800 Literature & rhetoric**
- 900 Geography & history**

Basic Types of Primary Sources:

- Letters, Diaries, and other First-person Narratives
- Manuscript/paper collections of Non-profit Organizations, prominent individuals or families
- Songs and Hymns
- Photographs
- Tools, machines, furniture and other **Artifacts**
- Court Proceedings
- Government Records, including Census Data
- Newspapers and Magazines
- Oral History Interviews (students can collect oral histories for their projects!)

Where do you find Primary Sources?

- School Library
- Public Library
- University Libraries
- State and Local Historical Societies and Archives (Check out the Texas Room at the HPL!)
- Organizations
- Video Store
- Art Museums
- All around your community
- National Archives and Records Administration
- The Internet

Creating a Project for National History Day
Step 3. Information: Scan it, Evaluate it, Read it, & Store it!

Objectives

TEKS: Grade Level Social Studies Skills

TAKS: Social Studies Objectives for Grades 8, 10, & 11 Exit Level

Objective 5: The Student will use critical-thinking skills to analyze social studies information.

Time: 1 class period

Concept Development

Key Concept:

Students will review tips on how to scan, read, evaluate their sources and choose a strategy for storing notes.

Introduction:

5 minutes

Students have found at least 1 or more sources on their topics. Now it's time to do something with those sources. Ask students what is the first thing they do when they pick up a magazine? (Look at the front cover, the pictures, read the headings, etc.) When students find an article that interests them, they read it. Students can use the same strategy when looking at a source for their history fair project.

Student Instruction:

20 minutes

Make a transparency of **Scan it, Evaluate it, Read it, & Store It!** for use with Step 3. Instruct students to start with one source. Briefly review each step with the students then allow them approximately 5 minutes to practice each step.

A. Scan it: a quick overview of the source.

1. Review any structural aids, such as titles, boldfaced headings, vocabulary, discussion questions, and illustrations.
2. It will help you remember information to make a prediction about what you will learn.
3. Does the information fit your topic?

B. Evaluate it.

1. Does this provide necessary information related to your topic?
2. Is the information from a reliable source?
3. If the answer is **NO** to either one of these questions, you must choose another source.

C. Read it: really get to know your source.

A One-Sentence Summary will help you remember the source.

1. Read it.
2. Reread it and make notes of main ideas and essential concepts.
3. Write a one-summary from your notes.
4. Share your summary with your partner or group.
5. List at least 3 details from each source. Use sticky notes to mark important information in the text. (Adapted from CRISS).

D. Store it.

Elementary & Middle School:

1. **Notes: Important People in History.**
2. **Notes: An Important Event in History.**
3. Create your own graphic organizer to store notes.

High School:

(4x6 index cards work well)

1. List bibliography info on 1 side.
2. List question/answer on the back.

Student Practice:

20 minutes

Allow students time to scan, evaluate, read and store information using the **Notes: Important People in History**, **Notes: An Important Event in History**, note card, or a graphic organizer of their choice.

Homework:

Students are to continue reading their sources and filling in the needed information on the handouts.

Assessment:

5 minutes

Check to see how students have chosen to store their information for their history fair project. Using an exit pass, ask students to tell you one thing they learned about their topic for the history fair project.

Closure:

5 minutes

Remind students that it is important to **scan**, **evaluate**, and **read** the information to get the most out of the sources they have picked for their project. It is also important that students choose a method to **store** information. Don't use sources that do not answer your questions.

Resources:

- **Scan it, Evaluate it, Read it, & Store It!**
- **Notes: Important People in History**
- **Notes: An Important Event in History**

Scan it, Evaluate it, Read it, & Store It!
A quick review of how to use your sources for projects.

A. Scan it: a quick overview of the source.

1. Review any structural aids, such as titles, boldfaced headings, vocabulary, discussion questions, and illustrations.
2. It will help you remember information to make a prediction about what you will learn.
3. Does the information fit your topic?

B. Evaluate it.

1. Does this provide necessary information related to your topic?
2. Is the information from a reliable source?
3. If the answer is **NO** to either one of these questions, you must choose another source.

C. Read it: really get to know your source.

A One-Sentence Summary will help you remember the source.

1. Read it.
2. Reread it and make notes of main ideas and essential concepts.
3. Write a one-sentence summary from your notes.
4. Share your summary with your partner or group.
5. List at least 3 details from each source. Use sticky notes to mark important information in the text. (Adapted from CRISS).

D. Store it.

Elementary & Middle School:

1. **Notes: Important People in History.**
2. **Notes: An Important Event in History.**
3. Create your own graphic organizer to store notes.

High School:

(4x6 index cards work well)

1. List bibliography info on 1 side.
2. List question/answer on the back.

Notes: Important People in History

Name _____	Period _____	Date _____	
Who is this Person? When did this person live?	Where did this person complete their accomplishments? When was it accomplished?	What was this persons accomplishments? When was it accomplished?	Why did this person do what they did?

SOURCE #1

Title
Author
Primary/
Secondary

SOURCE #2

Title
Author
Primary/
Secondary

SOURCE #3

Title
Author
Primary/
Secondary

SO WHAT? What was significant about this person? What difference did they make? What causes them to be so important?

Notes: An Important Event in History

Name	Period	Date	Who is involved? List Key Players. Are there two groups?	When did this event occur? Where did it occur?	What happened? Describe the facts of this event.	Why did this event occur and what were the results?
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SOURCE #1

Title
Author
**Primary/
Secondary**

SOURCE #2

Title
Author
**Primary/
Secondary**

SOURCE #3

Title
Author
**Primary/
Secondary**

SO WHAT? What was significant about this event? What difference did it make? What causes it to be an important event?

Creating Project for National History Day Step 4. Write the Process Paper

Objectives

TEKS: Study Skills

TAKS: Social Studies Objectives for Grades 8, 10, & 11 Exit Level

Objective 5: The Student will use critical-thinking skills to analyze social studies information.

Time: 1 class period

Concept Development

Key Concept:

Students will write a process paper explaining:

- how they chose their entry
- conducted their research
- selected their category
- how their project relates to the NHD theme.

Introduction:

5 minutes

Write the students' responses on the board or on the overhead.

You have been a witness to an automobile accident. The police want to get a statement from you. What do they want to know?

Student responses may vary, but something like this:

- What happened?
- Who was involved?
- Where were you when it happened?
- Were there other witnesses?

Writing a process paper is very similar. All you have to do is explain how you created your project. The NHD has given you a framework in which to write your process paper.

Student Instruction:

20 minutes

Go over the handout **Writing a Process Paper** with students. A sample is included. Make a transparency to use as a guide for students. Allow group members to work together. The details will vary depending on the students involved, their topic of study, etc. Tell students that the Process Paper should be no longer than 500 words. Students who are writing historical papers (1,500 to 2,500 words) are exempted from this step. **(See Rule 13: Process Paper)**

1. Explain how the entry was chosen. *Possible questions to answer:*
 - What steps led you to choose this topic?
 - What books helped you narrow your topic?
 - What experiences led you to study this particular topic?
2. Explain how the research was conducted. *Possible questions to answer:*
 - Where did you go to find information on your topic?
 - List the steps you took to find primary and secondary sources.
 - Who helped you find information?
 - If you conducted an interview, how did you set it up?
3. Explain why you chose the presentation category and how you created your project. (This is a tentative plan until the project is completed.)
 - Why did you choose an exhibit, performance, or documentary category? (Choosing a category will be discussed in the Step 5.)
 - If you are working with a partner or small group, what did each group member contribute to the project?
 - How did you design your project? (Story board, outline, timeline, etc.)
 - What materials did you use?

4. EXPLAIN HOW YOUR PROJECT RELATES TO THE THEME.

Restate the current year's theme (e.g., in 2005: **Communication in History: The Key to Understanding**).

List three details on how your topic relates to the theme. Remind students that the theme is the main idea and their topic supports the main idea.

For example:

Your topic could be about Helen Keller and how she learned to communicate with others using sign language. Helen also learned Braille and soon after, wrote about her struggle to learn to communicate with those who could hear and see.

5. Write the Annotated Bibliography. (See **Rule 14: Annotated Bibliography**.)
List only those sources that helped you complete your entry. Primary and secondary sources must be separated and labeled. The annotations for each source must explain how you used the source and how it helped you understand your topic. Annotations of web sites should include a description of who sponsors the site.

For example:

*Royal National Institute for the Blind. [The Life of Helen Keller.](http://www.rnib.org.uk/xpedio/groups/public/documents/publicwebsite/public_keller.hcsp)
http://www.rnib.org.uk/xpedio/groups/public/documents/publicwebsite/public_keller.hcsp August 13, 2004.*

This website provided me with short chronological summary of the life of Helen Keller. It gave me some insight as to her struggle to learn how to

communicate with those around her and how she later shared that story when she published her book The Story of My Life.

Student Practice:

20 minutes

Instruct students to list 3 details to support each point. Allow students this time to complete the handout and begin listing sources used on their project.

Homework:

1 minute

Based on your outline, write a rough draft of your Process Paper

Assessment:

4 Minutes

Using an exit pass, have students write a one-sentence summary describing how their project relates to the theme.

Closure:

5 minutes

Remind students that process papers help the judges of the projects understand why you chose your entry, how you conducted research and created your project. More importantly, the process paper shows how your topic and project relate the current **National History Day** theme.

Resources:

- **Writing a Process Paper**
- **Writing a Process Paper: Sample for Class Discussion**

Writing a Process Paper

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Directions: List 3 details each for Questions 1-4. Answer Question 5 on the back of this paper.

1. Explain how the entry was chosen.

- _____
- _____
- _____

2. Explain how the research was conducted.

- _____
- _____
- _____

3. Explain why you choose the presentation category and created your project.
**Outline the tentative plan until the project is completed.*

- _____
- _____
- _____

4. EXPLAIN HOW YOUR PROJECT RELATES TO THE THEME.

- _____
- _____
- _____

5. Write the Annotated Bibliography on the back of this paper.

Writing a Process Paper
Sample for class discussion / student notes

1. Explain how the entry was chosen. *Possible questions to answer:*
 - What steps led you to choose this topic?
 - What books helped you narrow your topic?
 - What experiences led you to study this particular topic?
2. Explain how the research was conducted. *Possible questions to answer:*
 - Where did you go to find information on your topic?
 - List the steps you took to find primary and secondary sources.
 - Who helped you find information?
 - If you conducted an interview, how did you set it up?
3. Explain why you choose the presentation category and how you created your project. (This is a tentative plan until the project is completed.)
 - Why did you choose an exhibit, performance, or documentary category? (Choosing a category will be discussed in the Step 5.)
 - If you are working with a partner or small group, what did each group member contribute to the project?
 - How did you design your project? (Story board, outline, timeline, etc.)
 - What materials did you use?

4. Explain how your project ***relates to the theme***. Restate the current year's theme (e.g., in 2005: **Communication in History: The Key to Understanding**).

List 3 details on how your topic relates to the theme. Remind students that the theme is the main idea and their topic supports the main idea.

For example:

My exhibit is about Helen Keller, a blind deaf-mute who first learned to communicate with others using sign language. Later, Helen learned Braille and soon after, wrote about her struggle to communicate with others in her book The Story of My life. Helen Keller soon became world renown, sharing her experiences and advocating for the causes of the blind that eventually led to the movie The Miracle Worker in 1961. Through sharing her experiences, Helen Keller's life exemplifies learning to communicate to understand the world around her and teaching others about a fulfilling life without sight or sound.

5. Write the Annotated Bibliography. (See **Rule 14: Annotated Bibliography**.) List only those sources that helped you complete your entry. Primary and secondary sources must be separated and labeled under headings Primary and Secondary Sources. The annotations for each source must explain how you used the source and how it helped you understand your topic. Annotations of web sites should include a description of who sponsors the site.

For example:

*Royal National Institute for the Blind. The life of Helen Keller.
http://www.rnib.org.uk/xpedio/groups/public/documents/publicwebsite/public_keller.hcsp August 13, 2004.*

This website provided me with short chronological summary of the life of Helen Keller. It gave me some insight as to her struggle to learn how to communicate with those around her and how she later shared that story when she published her book The Story of My Life.

Creating Project for National History Day
Step 5. Select the Category and Design/Outline the Product

Objectives

TEKS: Study Skills

TAKS: Social Studies Objectives for Grades 8, 10, & 11 Exit Level

Objective 5: The Student will use critical-thinking skills to analyze social studies information.

Time: 1 class period

Concept Development

Key Concept:

Students will draft a design for their project.

Introduction:

5 minutes

Ask students for a show of hands for Rockets fan or Houston Texans fan. Ask students what makes a winning team? The key responses should be hard work, practice, knowing the rules, and developing a good strategy. Tell students all four parts play an important role in any team's goal to win the game. In addition to all the hard work you have put into your research, you will choose a category to present your findings, make sure you know the rules and design a plan to create your winning project.

Student Instruction:

15 minutes

A quick introduction to the different types of projects and some tips to get you started, (from the National History Day web site):

A. Historical Paper

1. 1500-2500 word essay.
2. State a historical question and your claim to answer it.
3. The remaining paragraphs are facts, based on your research, to support your answer to the historical question.

B. Individual or Group Exhibit

1. Make the main idea clear to the viewer. The main idea should be placed in the center.
2. Organize the exhibit into subtopics.
3. 500-word limit. Only use captions and text to identify pictures, etc., or interpret information.

C. Individual or Group Documentary

1. Slide show, film, video, computer.
2. Use a storyboard to plan your documentary.

3. Include props, interview clips, etc. to support the main idea.

D. Individual or Group Performance

1. It is performed live in front of an audience.
2. Prepare a script that explains the main idea.
3. Include props that support the main idea.

Student Practice:

20 minutes

Instruct students, if they have not already done so, to choose the product or performance they want to create. Provide students with copies of the handouts for this unit. Allow students to choose the handouts they need.

1. Review the handout for the type of project you are interested in creating.
2. Write an outline of your historical paper, draft a design of your exhibit, or draft the storyboard for your documentary or performance.
3. List materials needed for the project, documentary or performance.

Homework: Over the next week:

1. Put project together or finish writing your research paper.
2. Finish your **Process Paper** (500 word limit). Research papers are exempted from this step.
3. Complete your **Annotated Bibliography**.

Assessment:

5 Minutes

Check the outline of the historical paper or draft design of the exhibit, documentary or performance.

Closure:

5 minutes

Remind students that both hard work and a well thought out plan will help create a winning project.

Resources:

- **Rules for All Categories: A Quick Review***
- **National History Day - Essential Information- *How to Write Your Essay***
- **Individual or Group Exhibits #1 of 2 *Elements of an Effective Exhibit***
- **Individual or Group Exhibits #2 of 2 *Levels of Text***

National History Day Rules

Adapted from Rules for All Categories: A Quick Review*

1. Your paper or project must relate to the annual theme.
2. You can only participate in ONE entry.
3. A paper, individual exhibit, individual performance, or individual documentary must be the work of one student. A group exhibit, group performance, or group documentary must be the work of a minimum of 2 students and no more than 5 students. Each member must participate.
4. Your paper or project must be developed during the current contest year.
5. Your paper or project must be your work. Your parents and teachers can only give you advice and guidance.
6. You must set up your project and supply necessary materials.
7. Be prepared to answer questions about your project.
8. You may not wear costumes UNLESS you and/or your group are performing.
9. Anything that can be dangerous or looks dangerous may not be used in your project. For example, no guns – real or pretend.
10. Create a title for your project.

Required Written Materials for All Entries

11. Create a *title page*
 - The Title
 - Your name(s)
 - The contest division and category
 - (Junior or Senior Division. Paper. Individual or Group: Exhibit, Performance, or Documentary)
12. You must have 3 copies of Rule #11, 13, & 14 – except historical papers.
13. A *Process paper* describes the process you used to create your project.
 - How you chose your topic.
 - How you conducted your research.
 - Why you chose your presentation category.
 - How your project relates to the NHD theme?
14. Write the *Annotated Bibliography*.
List only those sources that helped you complete your entry. Primary and secondary sources must be separated and labeled with the appropriate headings. The annotations for each source must explain how you used the source and how it helped you understand your topic. Annotations of web sites should include a description of who sponsors the site.
17. Do not, under any circumstance, claim credit for someone else's work.

*For a more detailed explanation of the "Rules" see the National History Day's *Rules for All Categories*.

Resource Handout: Historical Paper

National History Day Essential Information*

How to Write Your Essay

1. In the first paragraph, write your historical question state your hypothesis answering it. Say no more in this paragraph.
2. In the second paragraph, claim your first reason for believing your hypothesis in the first sentence. In the sentences that follow within this paragraph, write:
 - facts that support your hypothesis.
 - a statement that logically opposes your hypothesis. Give and explain evidence for this opposing claim.
 - a claim that rebuts the opposing hypothesis. Write evidence for your rebuttal. Explain how this evidence refutes this hypothesis.
 - an inferential question asking for new and unknown facts that will test the claims you made in this paragraph.
3. In the following paragraphs (except for the last one), do exactly what you did in the second paragraph for each additional reason you claim for your hypothesis.
4. In the final paragraph, simply restate your hypothesis.

If you follow these instructions, you will successfully show what you think about the history you researched.

*Adapted from **National History Day, *How to Write your Essay***
nationalhistoryday.org/02_contest/02.html

Elements of an Effective Exhibit

Orientation

Make sure the title and subtitle of the exhibit are prominent features of the design.
Make the main idea or thesis clear to the viewer.

Segmentation

Organize the exhibit into subtopics.
Use design elements to make subtopics clear to viewer.

Explanation

Use clear and concise captions and text to:

1. Identify pictures, objects, or documents, or
2. Interpret information for the viewer.

Resource Handout: Individual or Group Exhibits #2 of 2
National History Day / Essential Information / Exhibit

Levels of Text:
Introduction to the use of labels on historical displays

A TOWN BUILT ON IRON

↑ *The main title introduces the topic and attracts viewer interest.*

“The Evolution of Hibbing, Minnesota, 1880 – 1980”

↑ *The subtitle focuses the topic & limits what the project will interpret.*

Moving the Town

↑ *A subject label breaks down the topic into smaller parts for explanation and organization. Labels guide the viewer around the display.*

The original town site of Hibbing was located over a rich lode of iron ore. Because the ore was more valuable than the town, the buildings of Hibbing were moved to a new site in 1919.

↑ *Captions are the most detailed label and provide the opportunity for interpretation. These should be short, active, and clear.*

Resource Handout: Performance

National History Day / Essential Information / Performance

Creating Performance Entries

The performance category can be one of the most exciting ways to participate in History Day, since it is the only category in which students present their research live. 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.

Here are some suggestions for students who are preparing performances:

- Choose a theme-related topic that has personal interest and that will work particularly well as a performance.
- Decide whether the chosen topic will be most effective as a group or as an individual performance.
- Research the topic first. Write important facts or quotes which might be important to the performance; write a thesis statement, supporting statements, and a conclusion; and think about how these might become a part of the performance.
- Prepare a script. Brainstorm about general ideas and the ways they might be presented. If a group is performing, each member should describe different ways that the characters might interact. When writing the script, make sure it contains references to the historical evidence found in the research. Using actual dialogue, quotations, or excerpts from speeches are good ways of putting historical detail into the performance. Remember that the script should center on the thesis statement, supporting statements, and the conclusion.
- Be careful not to simply present oral reports on individuals which begin when they were born and end when they died. Instead, become the historical figure and write a script around an important time or place that will explain the major ideas.
- Prepare the set. Think about different types of sets which might help in depicting the topic. Is there a prop that is central to the story?

Important. Don't get carried away with props. Content is the most important factor, and any props used should be directly related to the theme. Remember that performers have only five minutes to set up and take down their props.

- Prepare the costuming. Use the most authentic costumes possible. Good costumes help make a performer convincing, but be sure they are appropriate to the topic. Consult photographs or costume guides if unsure about appropriate dress.
- Prepare the blocking. To block a performance is to determine where the actors will stand, move, and/or relate to the set. Students should think about these movements when deciding what type of set to design.

Practice, practice, practice! Work on the delivery, speaking clearly and pronouncing all words correctly. Practice voice projection so that the judges and the audience can hear every word. Practice with the set and full costumes as often as possible.

National History Day, Creating Performance Entries

nationalhistoryday.org/02_contest/02.html

Resource Handout: Category Rules

Individual Category Rules Papers

1. Length Requirements: 1500 to 2500 words.
2. Citations: footnotes, endnotes or internal documentation are required.
3. Preparation requirements: Papers must be typed, computer printed, or legibly handwritten in ink on plain, white 8.5 x 11 inch paper with 1-in margins on all sides. Numbered pages, double-spaced with writing on one side and with no more than 12 characters per inch or no less than 10-point type. Papers must be stapled in the top left corner and should not be enclosed in any cover or binder. No illustrations on the title page.
4. Submit 4 copies of the paper with the proper entry form by the deadline.

See National History Day *Contest Rule Book* for more specific information on how to write a historical paper.

Individual & Group Category Rules Performances

1. Time Limit: 10 minutes max.
2. Performance introduction: the title of your entry and the names of the participants must be the first and only announcement before the start of the performance.
3. Media Devices: Use of slides, tape recorders, computers, or other media within your performance is permitted. You must run all equipment.
4. Your script should NOT be included in any written materials.

See National History Day *Contest Rule Book* for more specific information on how to create a performance.

Individual & Group Category Rules Exhibits

1. Size Requirements: 40" wide, 20" deep, and 6 ft. tall. Does not include the table on which the exhibit is displayed unless it's part of the exhibit. Circular exhibits must be no more than 30" in diameter.
2. Media Devices – tape recorders, video monitors, projectors, etc. – must not run for more than a total of 3 minutes and are subject to a 500-word limit.
3. Word limit: There is a 500-word limit that applies to all student-created text that appears on or as part of an exhibit.

See National History Day *Contest Rule Book* for more specific information on how to create an exhibit.

Individual & Group Category Rules Documentaries

1. Time Limit: 10 minutes max.
2. Introduction: Announce the title of the presentation and names of participants only. No live narration or comments prior to or during the presentation.
3. Students are responsible for running all equipment and carrying out any special lighting or other effects.
4. All entries must be student-produced.
5. All entries must be original works. With proper credit, professional photos, film, slides, recorded music, etc. within the presentation may be used.
6. Credits: At the conclusion of the documentary, provide a general list of acknowledgements and credits for any featured music, images, film/media clips, interviews, or other sources.
7. Displays: Added (external) visuals or written material are not allowed.
8. Computer Entries: Student-composed computer programs are acceptable entries.

See National History Day *Contest Rule Book* for more specific information on how to create a documentary.

Resource Handout: Documentary

National History Day / Essential Information / Documentary*

Creating Documentary Entries

Constantly changing technology offers students limitless possibilities in developing media-based presentations for the documentary category. Students may create documentaries using slides, film, videos, and/or computers. Whatever presentation format is chosen, students must be able to operate all equipment, both during production and at each level of competition.

Important. The most important aspect of any entry is its historical quality. Students should not get so caught up in the production of a documentary that they lose sight of the importance of the historical quality. Judges are not looking for glitzy productions; rather, they are looking for solid research and a thorough analysis of the chosen topic.

Slide Presentations

Although the use of video and computer-based presentations in the documentary category is growing, slide presentations are still popular and effective. Slides can be either purchased or produced by students. The key to an effective entry is a good combination of visual images and recorded narrative. Here are some things to keep in mind:

- Make a storyboard of the types of images that explain the theme.
- Photograph pictures from books to build a slide collection and avoid too much repetition.
- Music is an important addition to the recorded narrative.
- Make sure the narrative fits with the image on the screen.

Film and Video Presentations

The availability of home video cameras has increased the popularity of this entry category, although movie cameras are still used by some students. If students are able to use editing equipment in their school or elsewhere, this can be an exciting and educational project. Many communities have cable access stations that have video equipment available for public use. Following are some suggestions for film and video entries.

Students should:

- Operate all camera and editing equipment.
- Draw up a storyboard of the scenes they will be shooting.
- Present a variety of panning shots, interviews, live action, and still subjects.
- Keep track of the scenes in a notebook or on index cards to make editing easier.
- Include music as an effective addition to the sound track.

Computer-Based Presentations

The computer has become a very important tool for creating documentaries. Students are using computer technology to create special effects, animation, graphics, and other visuals for use in slide or videotape presentations. Students who choose to use the computer to create their entries should have access to computers with multimedia capabilities and should be familiar with at least one type of presentation software. *QuickTime* and Adobe *Premiere* are two examples of software packages that are used to create projects. Students should also have access to editing equipment that they can operate themselves.

While most students are using computers as tools to help them to create various aspects of their presentations, some students are using computers as their vehicle for presentation. Although doing so is acceptable, there are a number of limitations to using the computer as the presentation device: Computer equipment is not supplied at the various levels of competition—students will have to provide their own equipment; computer presentations cannot be interactive (judges cannot push buttons, etc.); computer monitors are often too small for the judges and the audience to see; and computer presentations often inadvertently focus on the technology behind the presentation rather than providing an in-depth analysis of a historical topic.

***National History Day, Essential Information, Documentary**

nationalhistoryday.org/02_contest/02.html

Video Storyboard

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Notes	Visual	Audio

Creating Project for National History Day Step 6. *Evaluate Your Project*

Objectives

TEKS: Study Skills

TAKS: Social Studies Objectives for Grades 8, 10, & 11 Exit Level

Objective 5: The Student will use critical-thinking skills to analyze social studies information.

Time: 1 class period

Concept Development

Key Concept:

Students will use the NHD Judging Criteria Sheet to evaluate their product.

Vocabulary:

evaluate, judge

Introduction:

5 minutes

Distribute note cards or small slips of paper to students as they enter the classroom. Instruct students to write their project's title, their name or group members, and category. Collect the cards for use during the Student Practice.

Ask students what does it mean to *evaluate* or *judge* something? What criteria would you use to evaluate the performance of the Houston Rockets or the Houston Texans? For example, how would you rate the players on the quality of their performance? The player's dedication to the team? The player's ability? How well do the player's follow the rules? Players use the feedback they receive from their coaches to improve their game. Now that you have almost finished your project, you are going to evaluate or judge your project so that you can make any necessary changes.

Student Instruction:

10 minutes

Make a transparency **The Judging Criteria** to use during the class discussion. Provide each student or group with two copies of the **NHD National History Day** Judging sheet. Make sure students pick up the appropriate judging sheet for their type of project. (Paper, Exhibit, Documentary, or Performance.)

Before judging others' project or our own, let's quickly review the judging criteria.

The Judging Criteria: The first 3 criteria are the same for all 4 types of projects. (Adapted from the **National History Day Contest Rule Book, Section IV. How will your entry be judged? 2004**)

1. Historical Quality (60%)
 - Is the information correct?
 - Is there more than just a description?
 - Does the entry demonstrate the historical context – the time in which it occurred?
 - Did you use a variety of sources?
 - Did you use primary sources?
 - Are the sources one sided or are they balanced?
2. Relates to theme? (20%)
 - Does the topic relate to the theme?
 - Is this a significant event or person in history related to the theme?
 - How does the topic influence history?
 - How does the time period in which the event occurred/person lived affect the topic?
3. Clarity of presentation? (20%)
 - Is the project/paper original, creative, and imaginative?
 - Is the written material clear? Is the grammar correct? Is spelling correct?
 - Is the project well organized?
 - Is the performance believable?
 - Do you know how to run the equipment?
4. Rules compliance? Although there are no points deducted for not following the rules, failure to turn in an annotated bibliography or a process paper can exclude a project from moving on to the next stage, or earning an “A” grade.
5. Strengths? Area for improvement?
 - What did you like about the project?
 - What do you think needs improvement?

Student Practice:
25 minutes

1. Instruct students to attach 1 copy of the **NDH Judging Criteria** sheet to their paper or project with a paper clip. Students keep the second copy for later use. Distribute the note cards collected at the

beginning of class. Make sure each student does not receive their own project or paper to judge. Depending on class time, allow students approximately 8-10 minutes to judge the project. Students are to leave the judging sheets with the projects.

2. When they have finished, instruct students to judge their own projects, using the same process and amount of time.
3. Instruct students to review and discuss the comments they received from their peers.

Homework:

Based on the comments you received on your projects, make any necessary changes to the project in preparation for your school's **National History Day Fair**.

Assessment:

5 Minutes

As an exit pass, instruct students to write a one-sentence summary stating whether they thought the process they used to create their paper or project was helpful. Why or why not?

Closure:

5 minutes

Remind students to use the feedback from the judging sheets as a tool to improve their project.

Resources:

- **The Judging Criteria, A Quick Review**
NDH National History Day Judging Criteria Sheets
- **Paper**
- **Exhibit**
- **Documentary**
- **Performance**

The Judging Criteria A Quick Review

The first three criteria are the same for all four types of projects. (Adapted from the **National History Day Contest Rule Book, Section IV. How will your entry be judged? 2004**)

1. Historical Quality (60%)
 - Is the information correct?
 - Is there more than just a description?
 - Does the entry demonstrate the historical context – the time in which it occurred?
 - Did you use a variety of sources?
 - Did you use primary sources?
 - Are the sources one sided or are they balanced?
2. Relates to theme? (20%)
 - Does the topic relate to the theme?
 - Is this a significant event or person in history related to the theme?
 - How does the topic influence history?
 - How does the time in which the event occurred/person lived affect the topic?
3. Clarity of presentation? (20%)
 - Is the project/paper original, creative, and imaginative?
 - Is the written material clear? Is the grammar correct? Is spelling correct?
 - Is the project well organized?
 - Is the performance believable?
 - Do you know how to run the equipment?
4. Rules compliance? Although there are no points deducted for not following the rules, failure to turn in an annotated bibliography or a process paper can exclude a project from moving on to the next stage, or earning an “A” grade.
5. Strengths? Area for improvement?
 - What did you like about the project?
 - What do you think needs improvement?