

DOCUMENTARY CATEGORY



## D. Documentaries

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

### Part II, Rules for all Categories, applies to documentaries.

#### Rule 1: Time Requirements

Documentaries may not exceed 10 minutes in length. You will be allowed an additional 5 minutes to set up and 5 minutes to remove equipment. Timing will begin when the first visual image of the presentation appears and/or the first sound is heard. Color bars and other visual leads in a video will be counted in the time limit. Timing will end when the last visual image or sound of the presentation concludes (this includes credits).

**NOTE:** Use your set-up time to focus slides, adjust volume, etc.

#### Rule 2: Introduction

You must announce only the title of your presentation and names of participants. *Live narration or comments prior to or during the presentation are prohibited.*

#### Rule 3: Student Involvement

You are responsible for running all equipment.

#### Rule 4: Student Production

All entries must be student-produced. You must operate all equipment. You must provide the narration, voice-overs and dramatization. Only those students listed as entrants may participate in the production or appear on camera.

**Note:** This does not include interviews of participants in a historical event or of experts.

#### Rule 5: Entry Production

Your entry must be an original production. You may use professional photographs, film, slides, recorded music, etc. within your presentation. However, you must integrate such items into your presentation and give proper credit within the presentation as well as in your annotated bibliography. You must operate all editing equipment used in the production of your presentation.

**NOTE:** Using material created by others specifically for use in your entry violates this rule, except that which already exists.

#### Rule 6: Credits

At the conclusion of the documentary, you should provide a general list of acknowledgments and credits for all sources. These credits should be a brief list and not full bibliographic citations. All sources (music, images, film/media clips, interviews, books, Websites) used in the making of the documentary should be properly cited in the annotated bibliography.

#### Rule 7: Displays

Stand alone displays are prohibited.

#### Rule 8: Computer Entries

You must be able to run the program within the 10-minute time limit. Interactive computer programs and web pages in which the audience or judges are asked to participate are not acceptable; judges are not permitted to operate any equipment. Students must provide and be able to run their own computers and software. Internet access will not be available.

# IV.

## HOW WILL YOUR ENTRY BE JUDGED?

### A. Benefits of the Evaluation Process

The goal of National History Day is to provide you with a high-quality, educational experience—whether or not you win a prize. The judges' evaluation is part of the learning and skill building process of NHD. The judges' evaluations help you to improve areas or skills and provide positive feedback for the hard work you have put into producing your project. The judges' comments also can provide you with ideas for revisions and enhancements as you move from one contest level to the next. Remember, regardless of how your entry is ranked, by participating in National History Day you will benefit from the experience. You will gain research, thinking, and presentation skills which will last your whole life. You will become an expert on a topic of interest to you and to others. You will acquire poise and self-confidence and will learn to manage your time. You are a winner.

### B. Who are the Judges?

Historians, educators, and others interested in history and education serve as judges at each level of the National History Day competition.

### C. How Does the Evaluation Process Work?

At official National History Day contests, each separate National History Day division and category is usually judged as a whole by a panel of judges. Time constraints, due to the number of entries, often require that some categories be evaluated initially by several teams of judges. Finals then become necessary. In such cases, the entries judged best by each

team of initial judges are re-evaluated by a new team of judges to determine the winning entries in the category. The number of entries in finals and procedures for judging vary by contests and category and are within the discretion of the contest officials.

### D. Consensus Judging

Judges will not assign a numerical score to each entry; rather, they will rank the entries in their group. Judges are required to consult with each other in determining individual rankings. Judges are allowed to review the results of their category upon completion of the judging to assure accuracy in the evaluation process. As a final step, the judges will assign each entry an overall rating.

### E. The Subjective Nature of Judging

Remember: judges must evaluate certain aspects of your entry that are objective (e.g., were primary sources used; is the written material grammatical and correctly spelled). But judges must also evaluate interpretive aspects of your entry which are qualitative in nature (e.g., analysis and conclusions about the historical data).

Historians often reach different opinions about the significance of the same data. It is therefore crucial for you to base your interpretations and conclusions on solid research. Judges will check to determine whether you used available primary sources and if you were careful to examine all sides of an issue and present a balanced account of your research and presentation. Your process

paper and annotated bibliography are critical to this process.

## F. The Decision of the Judges is Final

You, your parents, and your teachers should realize that inadvertent inequities may occur in judging and that contest officials do want to be informed of any problems. The decisions of the judges are final.

## G. Evaluation Criteria

### Historical Quality (60%)

The most important aspect of your entry is its historical quality. You should ask yourself the following questions to help you focus on your historical analysis:

- Is my entry historically accurate?
- Does my entry provide analysis and

interpretation of the historical data rather than just a description?

- Does my entry demonstrate an understanding of historical context?
- Does my annotated bibliography demonstrate wide research?
- Does my entry demonstrate a balanced presentation of materials?
- Does my entry demonstrate use of available primary sources?

### Relation to Theme (20%)

Your entry must clearly explain the relation of your topic to the annual National History Day theme. You should ask yourself the following questions to help focus your topic on the theme and its significance:

- How does my topic relate to the theme?

