

# National History Day 2020 | Overview

## WEBSITES

National History Day <https://www.nhd.org/breaking-barriers-history>  
Texas History Day <https://tshaonline.org/education/students/texas-history-day/75> (Note: May NOT be current!)

## THEME

### **Breaking Barriers in History**

## COMPETITION DATES

29 February 2020 Fort Bend Regional History Fair | Lake Olympia MS  
25 April 2020 Texas History Day | Austin, Texas  
14-18 June 2020 National History Day | College Park, Maryland

## GENERAL RULES

- You may participate in the research, preparation, and presentation of only one entry each year.
- Groups may include 2 to 5 students
- All categories except historical papers must include a “process paper” with their entry.
- An annotated bibliography is required for all categories. The annotations for each source must explain how you used the source and how it helped you understand your topic.

## TYPES OF ENTRIES

### **Paper | Individual Only**

- A Paper is the traditional form of presenting historical research.
- The text of historical papers must be no less than 1,500 and no more than 2,500 words in length.
- Citations—footnotes, endnotes or internal documentation—are required.

### **Exhibit | Individual or Group**

- An Exhibit is a visual representation of your research and interpretation of your topic’s significance in history, much like a small museum exhibit.
- The overall size of your exhibit when displayed for judging must be no larger than 40 inches wide, 30 inches deep, and 6 feet high. Circular or rotating exhibits or those meant to be viewed from all sides must be no more than 30 inches in diameter.
- Media devices (e.g., tape recorders, projectors, video monitors, computers) used in an exhibit must not run for more than a total of 3 minutes and are subject to the 500 word limit (see below). Viewers and judges must be able to control media devices. Any media devices used must fit within the size limits of the exhibit.
- There is a 500-word limit that applies to all text created by the student that appears on or as part of an exhibit entry.

### **Performance | Individual or Group**

- A Performance is a dramatic portrayal of your topic’s significance in history and must be original in production.
- Performances may not exceed 10 minutes in length. You will be allowed an additional 5 minutes to set up and 5 minutes to remove any props needed for your performance.

### **Documentary | Individual or Group**

- A Documentary should reflect your ability to use audiovisual equipment to communicate your topic’s significance, much as professional documentaries do.
- 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.

### **Interpretive Website | Individual or Group**

- A Website should reflect the student's ability to use website design software and computer technology to communicate their topic’s significance in history.
- Website entries may contain no more than 1,200 visible, student-composed words. The entire site, including all multimedia, may use up to 100MB of file space.
- National History Day requires website projects to be created using the NHD-specific website editor (available November 2019).
- One page of the website must serve as the “homepage.” All pages must be interconnected with hypertext links. Automatic redirects are not permitted.
- A single multimedia clip may not last more than 45 seconds and may not include student-composed narration.
- Citations—footnotes, endnotes or internal documentation—are required.

## **ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- An Annotated Bibliography should contain all sources that provided usable information or new perspectives in preparing your entry. Your Final Annotated Bibliography must consist of at least ten (10) Primary Sources and eight (8) Secondary Sources.
- The annotations for each source must explain how the source was used and how it helped you understand your topic.
- An annotation normally should be about 1-3 sentences long.

## **PROCESS PAPER**

- A Process Paper is a description of no more than 500 words explaining how you conducted your research and created and developed your entry. All Entries (except Historical Papers) are required to submit a Process Paper.
- Section One should explain how you chose your topic.
- Section Two should explain how you conducted your research.
- Section Three should explain how you selected your presentation category and created your project.
- Section Four should explain how your project relates to the NHD theme.

## **RESEARCH**

### **1. Secondary Sources give you background and lead you to the PRIMARY SOURCES.**

- reference books
- popular periodical literature
- history textbooks
- general historical works and monographs
- journal articles

### **2. Get acquainted with PRIMARY SOURCES.**

- letters, diaries, and other first-person narratives
- manuscript/paper collections of non-profit organizations
- collections of 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 reviews

### **3. Find the PRIMARY SOURCES you need.**

- Make phone calls, send e-mail, or write to living historical figures—famous and not famous.
- Contact libraries local, state, and national historical societies and organizations to find out about their collections.
- Visit historic sites related to your topic:
  - public and college libraries
  - local and state historical societies
  - museums
  - state and federal archives
  - corporate archives
  - town and county historians
  - town hall records
  - town planning offices
  - schools
  - churches
  - community groups
  - community residents

### **4. Interpret the PRIMARY SOURCES.**

- Why are the sources you've chosen useful for answering the questions you want answered?
- What kind of information is not revealed by the sources you have (and may never be revealed because we can never know all the details of a historical event)?
- Who is the author/producer/storyteller?
- Why did they produce this document, paint this painting, or decide to tell you their story?
- Who was the intended audience?
- What was the purpose of the letter, diary, speech, etc.?
- In what kinds of situations were those songs sung, or those farm implements used?
- What are the key biases you see in this source?
- How much can we find out about the people whose voices do not appear in a particular document, from the perspective of the people who left written information?
- Who preserved this source of historical information and why?
- Do the various primary sources you've collected give you conflicting information? Why?
- How does what you learned from one photograph complement—or contradict—what you learned from a newspaper account?
- What do you know about the larger historical context (you know, the stuff you learned about in history class!) that can help you understand the particulars you find in your primary sources?
- How might the story you're uncovering as you research this topic relate to other episodes in history?

### **5. Enjoy the PROCESS and have FUN!**