

# NATIONAL HISTORY DAY

## LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students will be able to demonstrate how information collected during the research process is best interpreted and presented for the National History Day Competition by creating a final project of their choice (exhibit, documentary, performance, Web site, or paper).

## LESSON OVERVIEW

### STUDENTS WILL

- ✓ Watch a video that looks at how museums and historical societies preserve and interpret the past.
- ✓ Create a National History Day (NHD) project based on original research.

## VIDEO SYNOPSIS

Students will view a short video of the National Museum of the United States Air Force to hear from historians and curators to learn about how these professionals research, interpret, and exhibit the past. Then, students will get a behind the scenes look at how historical societies help preserve the past through the historical collections they maintain.

## TEACHER OVERVIEW

Museums and institutions such as library archives and historical societies are central to *preserving* our past. They do this by housing and caring for the artifacts in their collections. However, these organizations don't just preserve the past, museum curators work with historians, exhibit fabricators, archivists, and other museum professionals to craft exhibits that interpret past events in order to educate the public.

Like the professionals who create exhibits in museums, students will synthesize and interpret the research they conducted for the *History Around You* lesson in order to create a project for the National History Day competition. National History Day is much like a science fair in that students create projects to be entered into a competition and reviewed by judges. Each year sees a different theme for the competition which serves to guide student projects. Students choose historical topics related to a theme and conduct extensive primary and secondary research through libraries, archives, museums, oral history interviews and historic sites. For this lesson, student projects will build on the WWII local history research they have already begun. After analyzing and interpreting their sources and drawing conclusions about their topics' significance in history, students present their work in original papers, exhibits, performances and documentaries.

Each year, thousands of teachers along with nearly half a million students nationwide participate in the NHD contest. Students' final projects are evaluated by judges at a local NHD competition. Winners are entered into competitions in the spring at the regional or state levels where they are evaluated by professional historians and educators. The final national competition is held each June at the University of Maryland at College Park. National winners compete for scholarships among other prizes.

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## MATERIALS

Overhead projector  
LCD Projector  
Internet

## OHIO ACADEMIC CONTENT STANDARDS

### Grade 9

#### Social Studies Skills and Methods

1. Detect bias and propaganda in primary and secondary sources of information.
2. Evaluate the credibility of sources for:
  - a. Logical fallacies;
  - b. Consistency of arguments
  - c. Unstated assumptions
  - d. Bias
3. Analyze the reliability of a sources for:
  - a. Accurate use of facts;
  - b. Adequate support of statements;
  - c. Date of publication
4. Develop and present a research project including:
  - a. Collection of data;
  - b. Narrowing and refining the topic;
  - c. Construction and support of the thesis

### Grade 10

#### Social Studies Skills and Methods

1. Determine the credibility of sources by considering the following:
  - a. The qualifications and reputation of the writer;
  - b. Agreement with other credible sources;
  - c. Recognition of stereotypes
  - d. Accuracy and consistency of sources
  - e. The circumstances in which the author prepared the source
2. Critique evidence used to support a thesis.
3. Analyze one or more issues and present a persuasive argument to defend a position.

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## Grade 11

### Social Studies Skills and Methods

2. Determine criteria by which arguments will be judged.
3. Identify advocacy groups and obtain public policy information they produce.
4. Adjust a research question or topic based on information obtained while conducting research.
5. Choose a position on an issue and develop a rationale for that position.
6. Critique the conclusions drawn from survey and research data by questioning:
  - a. Sample size;
  - b. Demographics;
  - c. The sponsoring organization;
  - d. Logic of the conclusions reached.
7. Identify appropriate tools for communicating a position on an issue (e.g., electronic resources, newsletters, letters to the editor, public displays and handouts).

## Grade 12

### Social Studies Skills and Methods

1. Obtain and evaluate information from public records and other resources related to a public policy issue.
3. Research an issue or topic by gathering, recording, evaluating and interpreting relevant data.
4. Develop a research project and make formal presentations to the class and/or community members using:
  - a. Key terms;
  - b. Support for main ideas;
  - c. Examples;
  - d. Statistics and other evidence;
  - e. Visual aids;
  - f. Formal citation of sources.

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## INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE AND CORE ACTIVITIES

### (TEACHER PREPARATION)

1. Familiarize yourself with National History Day competition and the theme for the current year by visiting the National History Day Web site at [www.nationalhistoryday.org](http://www.nationalhistoryday.org). The category themes for the next several years are:

- 2008 Conflict and Compromise in History
- 2009 The Individual in History
- 2010 Innovation in History: Expression, Ingenuity, Enterprise
- 2011 Diplomacy and Dialogue in History: Successes, Failures, Consequences
- 2012 Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History
- 2013 Turning Points in History: People, Ideas, Events
- 2014 Geography in History: Impact, Influence, Change
- 2015 Rights and Responsibilities in History

2. Become familiar with the five project categories and rules for each:

<http://www.nationalhistoryday.org/ProjectCategories.htm>

- ✓ documentary
- ✓ exhibit
- ✓ paper
- ✓ performance
- ✓ Web site

You may choose to limit the types of entries for your students. For instance, you may not want the students to write a historical paper. Make the entries fit your specific classroom.

3. Make a folder to hold master copies of the Rules for each entry. NHD gives a brief description of each type of format. Access rules at NHD web site “Contest Rule Book”

[http://nationalhistoryday.org/02\\_contest/02.html](http://nationalhistoryday.org/02_contest/02.html)

4. You may wish to review the short video *Introduction to National History Day*. The video shows project formats and offers a nice introduction to the competition. For instance, a student performance is featured, exhibits are visible in the background, and students presenting and defending papers are also included. This video, as well as a lengthier overview of the competition is available online through the National History Web site at the online store.

5. As you proceed with the project, seek out help and opportunities to collaborate within your school for the various entries. For instance, the media specialist or technology coordinator may be available to help students create documentaries. The theatre teacher may be willing to help students with their performance entries.

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## HISTORY DAY TIMELINE

The History Day project will take several months to complete. The lessons in *The War: Exploring Your Local History* are designed to be incorporated into the normal teaching schedule. Contact the National History Day in Ohio office for contest deadlines, regional contests and further questions on the project at: <http://www.ohiohistory.org/historyday/>

## SAMPLE PACING SCHEDULE

<b>October – November</b>	<i>Interpreting the Past &amp; History Around You</i> : Students learn to locate and analyze primary sources, as well as conduct original historical research.
<b>November:</b>	Students build on preliminary research. Teacher may decide to include the living history interview lesson from <i>Conversations through History</i> as part of this process.
<b>December – February</b>	Students will be creating their projects during this time.
<b>January</b>	Process paper and annotated bibliography due.
<b>February</b>	Final project due.

## FROM ONE TEACHER TO ANOTHER: ADVICE ON HOSTING A HISTORY DAY EVENT (TEACHER PREPARATION)

Hosting a National History Day event can seem overwhelming. The key to operating a successful History Day competition is planning ahead and remaining flexible. No matter how much planning takes place, there will be a few “surprises” on the day of your event. Getting an early start will help you in the process. Begin by choosing a specific day for the competition let the janitorial staff and building administration know of the activity.

Begin thinking about the logistical requirements for the event and begin compiling a list of needs such as the number of tables needed to display the exhibits, TVs and DVD players needed for the documentaries, and computers for the power points and Web sites. In addition, you will need classrooms for the performances, papers, and documentaries. Ask for permission from other teachers to use their rooms during the event. The rooms should be in the same general location as the main competition space, this will make it easier for you and your assistants to supervise and help with any problems.

Approximately six weeks before the History Day competition, letters should be mailed to potential competition judges. Contact local museums and libraries, board members, other teachers in your school district, the history and education departments at local universities and invite them to judge at the competition. If you anticipate needing to recruit thirty judges, you will probably need to send over 90 letters. Make sure to ask for judges’ email addresses, this makes later contact and coordination much easier.

When a judge signs up, send a “thank you for volunteering” email and letting them know you will be contacting them again within 10 days of the competition. Begin assigning judges to project categories

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(exhibits, performances, papers, Web sites and documentary). Typically, you need a group of two judges. For exhibits and Web sites, judges will spend about 2 to 4 minutes looking at an exhibit and can usually judge 8 to 10 projects. Documentaries are 20 minutes in length (10 minutes running time, 10 minutes for set up) so groups of judges can view about 4 to 6 documentaries. The timeframe is similar for performances. Try not to overwhelm your judges with too many projects to evaluate and be sure to send sample evaluation sheets to the judges prior to the competition. On the day of the event, provide a room for the judges, free from students and their parents, with snacks and light refreshments where they may finish their evaluation sheets.

One week before the competition, contact a few responsible students to help you with the day's activities. This is also a good time to order food, pick up folders (for the judges' material) collect pencils, tape measures, make name tags, collect extension cords and any other supplies for the competition. Remind teachers who have agreed that you will be using their classrooms. This is also a good time to survey the students for their individual needs. Have all students complete a general worksheet listing the title and category of their project, group member names, and special needs for their project. For instance, does an exhibit require electricity for a CD player or computer? These projects will need to be positioned near outlets. For performances and documentaries, describe the types of computers and equipment available for the presentations and encourage them to bring in their projects and test them on the equipment. It is the students' responsibility to know how to run the equipment on the day of the competition.

For exhibits, the students are assigned a specific place in the exhibit hall. Write this information on an index card to give the students and then have index cards on the tables in the exhibit room. Inform students that they may not switch places because the judges are assigned specific numbers to evaluate. Depending on the location of your exhibit hall, arrange have the custodial staff set up the tables the evening before.

On the day of the event, place a couple of students at the entrance to the school to direct judges to the judging room and parents to the exhibit halls. Have a few students in the hallways to help direct traffic. Have a judge's sign in station where they will pick up their judging packets. Include a copy of the judging instructions, evaluation sheets, and a schedule of projects to judge, pencils, and a nametag. Also include a copy of the layout of the exhibit hall and a floor plan for the classrooms to be used for the documentaries and performances. Color code the judging packets so exhibit judges receive a white folder, performance judges received a blue folder, etc. As the judges arrived, check their names off of the registration list.

Have a refreshment table (cookies and punch) for the parents. Students could bring in two dozen cookies for extra credit. The parents are restricted from the exhibit hall during the judging process but afterwards, the parents are free to view all the exhibits. Finally, one week before the competition, send home a letter to the parents outlining the events for the evening. Certificates for participation, as well as the first, second, and third place certificates are needed for each category, both individual and group. Make sure to create several certificates for the group categories, one for each member of the group. Most importantly enjoy the competition, both students are excited about their projects and parents are proud of their children.

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## SAMPLE AGENDA

- 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.** Competition time: Students are required to stay with exhibits during judging. Parents are prohibited from the exhibit hall.
- 6:00 – 6:30 p.m.** Judges complete evaluations and make final decisions. Evaluations are collected and winners are determined.
- 6:30 – 7:00 p.m.** Exhibit hall open for viewing.
- 7:15 – 7:30 p.m.** Awards given in auditorium.

## GUIDED VIEWING AND NATIONAL HISTORY DAY INTRODUCTION

1. Begin the class with a discussion about museums. Ask what kinds of things can we learn from museums? Ask students who they think creates the exhibits and how they go about this task. Ask students what they think they might be able to learn about WWII by looking at air craft from that period.
2. Show the video *The National Museum of the United States Air Force and Dayton History*. Have students take notes while watching and then complete the **Guided Viewing Worksheet**.
3. Hold a follow up discussion. Ask students about their impressions and if they have learned any new ways to think about artifacts and what we can learn from them. Bring up the topic of the violin that was discussed in the video. How was this one object used to tell a bigger story?
4. Then ask the students to think back to the video *An Historian's Perspective* in which Dr. Winkler describes some of the controversy surrounding the dropping of the second atomic bomb in WWII. Then have them think about the bomber Bockscar, the plane that dropped the second atomic bomb on Nagasaki, which is now housed at the National Museum of the United States Air Force. Poll students for some of the difficulties in interpreting this artifact, then ask for them to think of how they might interpret the event in an unbiased manner in an exhibit of their own.
5. Now, let students know, that much like the museum professionals and Dayton History staff they heard from in the video, they will be transforming their preliminary local history research into a National History Day Project.
6. Finally, provide an overview of the National History Day Competition. Write the History Day theme for the year on the board and discuss the meaning of the theme. Explain how students' NHD projects must relate to the theme. Let the students know that the NHD project will be a long process taking several months, but that they will be building off of their WWII local history research.

## GETTING STARTED: SELECTING A PROJECT CATEGORY

1. Begin by reminding students of the NHD theme for the current year. Then let students know that there are five category formats from which they can choose to create their projects. Write the five project categories on the board and give a short explanation of each format. (exhibit, paper, performance, documentary, Web site)

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2. Use the overhead to introduce the different types of formats and distribute the **NHD Project Categories** handout to students.
3. From the National History Day Web site, download and print copies of the rules pertaining to each format and make them available on a bulletin board space dedicated to the NHD competition. The bulletin board should display the contest theme, copies of the rules, category descriptions, as well as important information like due dates and contest timeline.
4. Ask students if they have any questions. Advise them to look at the National History Day Web site for more information. Students should continue to work with the students from their local history research group and begin thinking about which format they will choose.

## NATIONAL HISTORY DAY PROJECT CATEGORIES

### **Historical Paper**

Historical papers are the traditional methods of presenting historical research and interpretation. This format requires strong writing skills. In addition to research papers, students may choose to write an historically-based creative paper such as an epic poem or fictional diary. The paper must be between 1500 and 2500 words and is for individual entries only.

### **Exhibit**

Exhibits are visual displays of interpretive research. Similar to museum exhibits, labels and captions are used to inform the viewer of the topic, thesis, and interpretation. Exhibits are usually created using a three sided presentation board that must adhere to the size regulations ( 40" wide, 30" deep and 6' tall); There is a limitation of 500 words on the exhibit. This does not include quotes.

### **Documentary**

Through the documentary category students can become Ken Burns. Videos or Power Point presentation are acceptable. Students incorporate film, video, photographs, music and other sound recordings, as well as narration to present their topic. The documentaries are limited to ten minutes total running time. A special Power of Story documentary film making guide is available on the Ken Burns The War Web site. The guide can be downloaded at: [http://www.pbs.org/thewar/edu\\_power\\_of\\_story.htm](http://www.pbs.org/thewar/edu_power_of_story.htm)

### **Performance**

The performance category is a dramatic portrayal of a topic; it must be original and creative but should not simply be a speech full of facts. The performance can be given as a monologue or a group acting out a specific event that ties to the topic; performances are also limited to 10 minutes in length. Students should write out their script and hold rehearsals just as they would to prepare for a play or other performance. Props and music are encouraged.

### **Web Site**

A History Day Web site is a computer-based representation of research that incorporates both text and non-text content (e.g. images, songs, interviews, videos, and other media) to engage and inform your viewer about your topic. A web site is more than just an electronic paper or an exhibit on a computer. Web sites can be designed to be interactive and students should try and incorporate this.

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## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. Poll students to make sure all groups have chosen a project category.
2. Explain to the students in order to create their NHD projects, they must have a plan. Since they have already chosen and researched their topics, they now must think about how they will put all of the information together. They will begin this process by writing a thesis statement in which they take a clear position on their topic. The thesis should also relate to the NHD theme. Students should hand in their written thesis for review and comment.
3. Once students have revised their thesis based on teacher feedback, they can proceed with their project by creating a project outline. Their outline will help them organize their information.
4. Now ask students if they know what a “story board” is? Explain that a storyboard is similar to a comic strip and lays out how a video or movie is made. A storyboard can help students organize the visual elements of their project whether or not they are creating a documentary.
5. Instruct students to “storyboard” their outline. They will do this by listing the images, quotes, performance sequence etc. that they intend to include to support each outline topic. This activity will also help students see where they may still need to collect additional information, images, or other support.
6. Once students have completed the storyboard exercise, they may begin creating their NHD projects.

## PROCESS PAPER AND ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Remind students that since History Day is a national contest there are specific rules that must be followed. The rules keep the contest fair and consistent throughout all of the fifty states. Today, the students will learn about the required written materials for all entries.
2. Explain to the students that before viewing their projects the judges will first read a process paper. This is the first impression that the judges have of the students’ projects. The process paper explains what the project is about, why the student(s) chose the topic, how they conducted their research, and how it relates to the overall NHD theme. Students who are doing the historical paper entry DO NOT write a process paper.
3. Download and print sample process papers from the NHD Web site and distribute copies to the class. Have a transparency of the created and project the sample process paper using an overhead projector. Encourage students to take notes on their copies of the process paper. Review the elements of the paper as a class.
4. From the NHD Web site download, print, and distribute copies of the sample annotated bibliography. Again create a transparency and project on the overhead.

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5. Explain to the students that an annotated bibliography is required for all categories. Their bibliography should contain all of the sources that students used in creating their projects. Students should work from the citations page they created for their local history research for the History Around You lesson. Sources are divided into two categories: primary and secondary. The annotations are brief descriptions included after each source that explain how the student used the source and how it helped them understand their topic. Students may use MLA or Chicago style of citation. Teachers can require only MLA or Chicago (Turabian) if they choose.
6. Assign a due date for the process papers and annotated bibliographies to be turned in. Return within a week with corrections and suggestions. Students should be given two to three days to make corrections and resubmit the final process paper and annotated bibliography.

## THE FINAL PROJECT EVENT DAY

1. Students should bring in their completed projects. Congratulate students on successfully completing their History Day projects.
2. Now have students complete the contest entry forms, one entry form per project. First, pass out the Entry form for the students to complete. Have the students complete one entry form per project, the title on the project must match the title that appears on the process paper for the project. At this time have students complete a sign up for any special equipment or needs they have for the day of the competition.
3. Explain that to help prepare for the NHD competition day judging, students will use the same judging evaluation form to evaluate their own project. Distribute the student History Day evaluation sheets to the group. Groups should complete an evaluation sheet individually, based on each student's perception of the finished project. Inform the students that the evaluation will not have any effect on their final project grade. Encourage the students to include comments justifying the final point value. Collect evaluation sheets as students complete them.
4. Finally, group the students by category. For instance, all the individual exhibit students sit in a group together; the group exhibit students together, performances etc. Distribute the judging evaluation sheets for each category. Have one student, from each group read over their evaluation form. Have the students discuss the criteria that their projects will be evaluated by. The teacher will circulate and answer any questions that the students have and make suggestions for any adjustments that the students may need to make to their projects prior to the competition.
5. Again, congratulate the students on completing the project and inform them of the days and times of the building History Day event.

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## ANSWER KEY AND ASSESSMENT

### NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE AND DAYTON HISTORY GUIDED VIEWING

1. By looking at artifacts, and depending on the information they hold, we can learn about the how things looked, the types of things people used, what things were important to them, when something happened. These artifacts can help us “picture” the past.
2. You can look at artifacts from the perspective of not just what the object is, but how it was used, and who the people were that used them.
3. Invasion stripes were stripes painted on the underside of plane wings so that the allies could recognize their own planes from the ground. This can help illustrate what combat was like in that there were practical problems that people on the ground had to come up with their own solutions for.
4. The historians and curators look at primary source evidence to make sure the artifacts look as they should. They conduct historical research to arrive at an exhibit that is as accurate as possible.
5. Air men and women personalized their air craft through “nose art.” Nose art can reveal many things about the people who flew the plane including number and location of missions flown; it could reflect popular culture through cartoons and music and was a way of maintaining a measure of individuality.
6. One of the reasons air power became a significant tactical force in WWII with the technical advances in air craft carriers and bombers.
7. The museum features artifacts and exhibits with ties to the Miami Valley including a display featuring local Tuskegee Airmen and a pistol chambered in the Dayton region.
8. The Tuskegee Airmen was a popular term used to identify the group of African American pilots who flew with distinction in WWII.
9. The Archives Center in Dayton holds letters, photographs, posters, and artifacts like medals in their collections.
10. The secret project led by Joe Desch involved work to break the NAZA secret codes used for communication during the war.

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## HISTORY DAY PROJECT SCORING GUIDELINES (TOTAL POINTS CAN BE ADJUSTED BY TEACHER)

Name(s)

Entry Category

Title of Entry

Requirements (150 points)

Participation in competition ..... 25 points

Process paper ..... 20 points  
(double-spaced, typed, correct format, content, grammar and mechanics)

Annotated Bibliography ..... 20 points  
(variety of sources, both primary and secondary and divided by type, correct citation format, short description of each source, typed )

Adherence to category rules ..... 10 points

Historical Accuracy and Understanding of the subject ..... 25 points

Final Project ..... 50 points  
(creativity, craftsmanship, neatness, innovation)

150 possible points

Total \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

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Student Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date:

\_\_\_\_\_

## NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE AND DAYTON HISTORY: GUIDED VIEWING

1. What are some things we can learn from visiting museums and looking at artifacts?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. What are some ways we can think about looking at artifacts?

\_\_\_\_\_

What were "invasion stripes" that the curator Terry Aitken describes? In what way can this help illustrate what combat was like during the War?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. How do the historians and curators who create the exhibits know that they are arriving at an accurate representation of the past?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. In what ways did Air men and women personalize their aircraft and what can these tell us about the people themselves?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. In what ways had air power had become a significant tactical force by WWII?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Name some of the examples of exhibits and artifacts with local history connections at the museum.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Who were the Tuskegee Airmen?

\_\_\_\_\_

8. What are some of the artifacts held at the Archives Center at Dayton History?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What was the secret project undertaken by NCR in Dayton, Ohio during the War?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## NATIONAL HISTORY DAY PROJECT CATEGORIES

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