

History Day Judging Process

Greet

Take time to give a brief explanation of the judging process to the students and set them at ease. Exhibit judges can walk up to the next entry and shake hands with the students. At this time you should request copies of the Research Description/Process Paper and Bibliography so you can...

Read

You may not have time to completely read the entire Process Paper, especially those with large bibliographies. Focus on the Research Description and survey the sources used. Since you will keep one copy for your judging team, you will be able to refer back to the Process Paper during your discussion session. When your team is done looking at the Process Paper, it is time to...

View

Exhibit judges should read the text of the display. Remember, the students should not give you an oral presentation about their work. Performance and documentary judges should give the signal to begin and make sure that the students introduce themselves and the title of their presentation. As you view the entries you should make preliminary notes on your judging forms. You will be able to expand on these later. At the end of the presentation it is time to...

Question

Student answers to your questions do not weigh heavily in your overall evaluation of an entry. You should use this opportunity to allow students to share their understanding of their topic and how they presented it. Specific questions will come to mind as you view the entry, but other things to ask about include: How did they pick their topic? What was their most important source or discovery? What role did each group member play in the development of the entry? What was the most important thing they learned during their History Day experience? **Do not offer suggestions for improvement at this time.** You will be able to include these comments once you retire to the judging room and ...

Discuss

All History Day results are determined by a consensus reached by each judging team. After you have viewed all of your entries you should return to the judges' room to make your decisions. Some judges have a short preliminary discussion right after they view each entry. Each judge will make their own comments. Column ratings do not need to be identical, but should be in the same range. The overall rating must be the same for each judge.

HISTORY DAY JUDGING TIPS

Your job as a History Day judge is to evaluate student entries on the basis of historical quality and depth, demonstration of the relationship between topic and theme, and effectiveness of presentation.

Judging Ratings

Rather than using point ratings, History Day evaluates entries in relative terms of “Good,” “Excellent,” or “Superior.” There are no points assigned to the different evaluation columns. The aim is to remove the confusion related to assigning numerical scores to subjective decisions. Instead, the students can focus upon how the judges have identified the relative merits or areas for improvement of the entry. This should not disrupt the judging process; in fact, some people may find it simpler to judge without having to be concerned with point values. The judges are simply asked to rank their selections according to the criteria.

Oral Interactions

At the end of each presentation you will have the opportunity to ask students questions about their entries. Use this opportunity to inquire about the decisions they made in developing their project, the roles of group members, their understanding of the subject and/or the theme, or any other topic that will help you evaluate their work. (Please refer to the separate sheet with sample questions.) Try to avoid suggestive commentary when talking to students and reflect these ideas in your written comments.

Written Comments

The key to History Day judging is to provide positive, but critical, evaluations of each entry. Begin your comments with the most positive features of the entry. Critical comments are best phrased as suggestions. (e.g. “You may want to...,” “Did you consider...,” or “Other issues important to this topic are...”) Any constructive commentary is valuable for students, but this is especially important for Regional Finalists who can change their entries using your suggestions.

FINAL CHECKLIST FOR A HISTORY DAY ENTRY

- Does this student’s work demonstrate historical research and scholarship?
- Does the student make an argument about the impact or historical significance of their topic in history? (Remember that the students’ views and understanding may differ from your own. Consider the strength of their points rather than their beliefs.)
- Does this student’s entry communicate his or her ideas in an organized and effective way?
- Does this student’s project reflect careful and reasoned work?