

West Tennessee History Day Judging Rubric

These guidelines will help judges make comparisons between projects—essential for selecting 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners—and they can also help judges make useful comments on the judging sheet. Fair and effective judging is essential to providing students with a high quality, educational experience on History Day. Judges' comments are fundamental to making the History Day contest a good learning experience for participating students.

Historical Quality (60%) ALL ENTRIES

Judging Criteria	Superior	Excellent/Good	Good/Needs Improvement
Entry is historically accurate.	Main ideas are supported by facts, which are supported by evidence (primary sources). Entry contains no obviously inaccurate information	Entry would be improved with more evidence. Entry contains no obviously inaccurate information.	Entry raises questions about the accuracy of facts, or facts seem correct, but need to be supported by more evidence.
Shows analysis and interpretation.	Entry has a clear thesis (main idea or point of view). The thesis is supported by thoughtful analysis and interpretation, which acknowledges strengths and weaknesses of the historical evidence.	The thesis is not clearly stated. Entry includes more description than analysis or interpretation.	Entry has no clear thesis and only describes people or events without analysis or interpretation.
Places the topic in historical context.	Entry includes accurate and appropriate references to the time period by specifying the political, economic, social and cultural influences (events, ideas, people, places and objects). Entry shows historical perspective -- the causes and consequences of an event, or the relationship of a local topic to larger trends or events.	Entry only refers to the time period, and may mention surrounding events, ideas, people, and objects but does not demonstrate how they illustrate the political, economic, social and cultural influences of the time. The causes and consequences of the topic, or the relation of a local topic to a larger trend, are not fully developed.	Entry refers to the time period in non-specific ways. Entry is only descriptive and does not analyze the topic's causes and consequences.

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Shows wide research.	Varied sources (primary and secondary) are used to advance the entry's thesis and analysis. Interpretation and conclusions are based on solid research.	Some variety of sources (primary and secondary) is used, but interpretation and conclusions could be enriched by more sources showing varied points of view.	The sources are not diverse (they may be mostly secondary), and their relation to the thesis is not clear.
Uses available primary sources	Entry shows the creative use of a wide variety of primary sources. Entrant understands the distinction between primary and secondary sources	Primary sources are few and/or sometimes confused with secondary sources.	Entry would be improved by including available primary sources.
Research is balanced.	All sides of the topic are examined. While entry may focus on one interpretation, based on evidence and analysis, it acknowledges and analyzes multiple points of view (e.g., those who suffered as well as those who benefited, males and females, people from different racial, ethnic or socioeconomic groups), as appropriate	Entry presents and advocates one interpretation over any other with little evidence or analysis, or consideration of multiple points of view.	Entry only presents one point of view when it is obvious that others exist.

Relation to Theme (20%) ALL ENTRIES

Judging Criteria	Superior	Excellent/Good	Good/Needs Improvement
Entry clearly relates topic to the History Day theme.	Entry topic is closely linked to the theme and the connection to the theme is demonstrated throughout.	Entry is related to the theme, but would be strengthened by more links throughout.	Entry's relation to the theme is implied, but not clearly explained.
Demonstrates the significance of the topic in history and draws conclusions.	Entry demonstrates the topic's significance in history by showing its influence or impact over time. Entry does not confuse fame with significance. Entry has a clearly stated conclusion and answers the question, "Why was this important?"	Entry states that the topic is significant, but does not illustrate its influence or impact through evidence. Conclusion needs more explanation to be convincing.	Entry suggests that the theme is significant, but does not demonstrate its significance. Entry's conclusion is implied, not stated.

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Clarity of Presentation (20%) HISTORICAL PAPERS			
Judging Criteria	Superior	Excellent/Good	Good/Needs Improvement
Written material is original, clear, appropriate, organized and well presented.	Entry is well organized and logical. The sections and main points are easy to discern. The entry is best presented as an historical paper.	Entry is understandable, but could be better organized (the sections and main points vary in clarity).	Entry presents information clearly in most cases and shows evidence of organization, but sections and main points are difficult to discern.
Text is clear, with correct grammar and spelling. Entry is neatly prepared.	Citations are used properly. The text is clear, grammatical, correctly spelled and neatly presented.	Entry text is, with some exceptions, clear, grammatical, correctly spelled, and neatly presented. There may be some inconsistency in citations	The text's clarity, neatness, grammar, spelling, and the format of some citations, could be improved.
Clarity of Presentation (20%) PERFORMANCE			
Judging Criteria	Superior	Excellent/Good	Good/Needs Improvement
Presentation and written materials are original, clear, appropriate, organized, and articulate.	Entry is an original dramatic portrayal of a topic. Performance combines dramatic appeal with historical accuracy and effectively uses the ten minutes. Script is clear and creative.	Entry has moments when dramatic appeal is lost and the performance becomes more like an oral report. Script contains some errors of historical accuracy (language, for example). Effectively uses the ten minutes.	Entry utilizes some methods of dramatic presentation, but is more like an oral report or just recites facts. Ten minutes is not used effectively
Performers show good stage presence; props/costumes are historically accurate.	Entry performers show good stage presence and props/costumes are historically accurate and an integral part of the presentation.	Entry performers have stage presence; props/costumes are historically accurate, but are not always an integral part of the presentation.	Entry performers are sometimes stiff and/or hard to hear/understand; props/costumes have some historical inaccuracies and /or are not always an integral part of the presentation.

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Clarity of Presentation (20%) DOCUMENTARIES			
Judging Criteria	Superior	Excellent/Good	Good/Needs Improvement
Presentation and written materials are original, clear appropriate, organized, and articulate	Entry is an original audiovisual production that is well organized and communicates the main message and the topic's significance. The script is clear, the visual images and sound are appropriate, and the entrant has mastered the technical skills required.	Entry could have been better organized to communicate the main message and the topic's significance. The script is unclear or too vague in places, the visual images, and sound are occasionally vague (in relation to topic).	The script is sometimes unfocused and does not always underline the main message of the audiovisual production. Some images and sounds are unrelated or unidentified
Entry is organized, has visual impact, and the documentary category is appropriate to topic.	Entry utilizes multimedia (such as interviews, film footage, site visits) to communicate the main message and central points. The topic is best suited for the documentary category.	Entry utilizes images and audio but relies mostly on narration to communicate the main message and central points.	Entry utilizes images and audio but they do not always explain central points. Text is used to communicate the main message and central points instead of images and sound.
Clarity of Presentation (20%) WEBSITES			
Judging Criteria	Superior	Excellent/Good	Good/Needs Improvement
Presentation and written material are original, clear, appropriate, organized, and articulate.	Web pages are well organized with the title, section divisions, and main message clear and easy to recognize. Multimedia is clearly captioned and enhances the message of the web site. The entrant has mastered the technical skills required.	Section divisions and main message are a little hard to find at first. The entry could be improved by more focused (or less) multimedia content and clearer captions that relate to the message of the web site.	Entry shows evidence of organization, but main message needs to be clearer. Captions do not enhance the message of the web site. Some multimedia content is unrelated or unidentified. Errors in grammar, spelling, etc.

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<p>Web site is easy to navigate, has visual impact and appeal; multimedia is appropriate and interactive.</p>	<p>The home page's main menu effectively orients and directs viewers to section divisions and supplemental information. Links to plug-ins are clearly identified. Multimedia is interactive and communicates central points. The entry is best suited to the web site category</p>	<p>The home page orients and directs viewers, though some web pages or links may be hard to find. Entry utilizes multimedia but relies on text and passive images to communicate central points; it could be more interactive.</p>	<p>The navigation structure does not clearly orient and direct viewers, and results in dead ends or broken links. Entry utilizes multimedia but is not interactive and does not always explain central points. Lacks effective design elements.</p>
<h3>Clarity of Presentation (20%) EXHIBITS</h3>			
<p>Judging Criteria</p>	<p>Superior</p>	<p>Excellent/Good</p>	<p>Good/Needs Improvement</p>
<p>Written material is original, clear, appropriate, organized, and articulate.</p>	<p>Exhibit is well organized with the title, section divisions, and main message clear and easy to recognize. Photographs, images and supplemental information are appropriate in terms of content and location, and are clearly captioned and enhance the message of the exhibit</p>	<p>Entry is neat and includes section divisions and main message, but they are a little hard to find initially. The entry could be improved by more focused (or fewer) images and supplemental information and clearer captions that relate to the message of the exhibit</p>	<p>Entry shows evidence of organization, but section divisions and main message need to be clearer and easier to recognize. Written material may contain some errors in articulation. Labels and captions do not enhance the message of the exhibit.</p>
<p>Exhibit is organized, has visual impact, correctly uses maps, photos, etc.</p>	<p>Entry is visually effective and utilizes images and artifacts (such as maps, photos, models, etc.) to Communicate central points. The overall appearance is pleasing. The entry is best suited to the exhibit category</p>	<p>Entry utilizes visual display but relies on text more than visual impact to communicate central points.</p>	<p>Entry utilizes visual display and text but images do not always communicate central points. Entry may be cluttered, or entry is sparse and needs more visual impact.</p>