Baltimore City History Day 2020
Breaking Barriers in History
Judges' Orientation

Thank you for supporting Baltimore City History Day! Many young people have engaged in months of research and preparation, and they are anxiously awaiting your evaluations. We appreciate your contributions of your time, energy, and expertise. In this document you will find general information and suggestions about judging for History Day.

Category Overviews (consult NHD rule book for detailed rules for each category):

- **Categories and Divisions:** There are five categories – *papers, websites, documentaries, performances, and exhibits*. Papers are individual projects only, but the other four categories may have individual or group projects with 2 to 5 students in a group. There are two divisions – Junior Division (middle school) and Senior Division (high school).
  
  - **Papers:** Paper judges read the papers ahead of time, and then interview students on the day of the contest. As with other categories, the paper should include an annotated bibliography, but the process paper is not required in this category.
  
  - **Websites:** Website judges review the website ahead of time, and then interview students on the day of the contest.
  
  - **Documentaries:** Students must run all equipment. Use a precise timing device to make sure the documentary is accurately timed.
  
  - **Performances:** A performance must be original (students cannot use something that is already written). Performers should display stage presence, including clear and audible voices. Costumes do not need to be elaborate; they can be simple, but should be appropriate to the topic. Take into consideration nerves, forgotten lines, and audience applause or laughter when timing the performance. Use a precise timing device to make sure the performance is accurately timed.
  
  - **Exhibits:** An exhibit may contain no more than 500 student-composed words (this does not include quotations from primary sources, but does include timelines, captions, etc. that are student composed). Some students use media devices (tape recorders, computers, etc.) as part of their exhibits, but judges should not be swayed by the use or lack of use of such equipment.
General Instructions:

- You will be working in a team of at least two judges. Some categories are being judged in more than one room. One judge has been designated as the team captain for each judging team, and is responsible for guiding the team in accomplishing the necessary tasks, including submitting proper forms and paperwork. The diagram below outlines a sample judging process:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Room 101</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judge A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judge B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judges A and B select the top 2 of 6 projects interviewed in Room 101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Room 102</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Judge C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judge D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judges C and D select the top 2 of 6 projects interviewed in Room 102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Judges A, B, C, and D meet in Room 102 and discuss the four projects that both teams selected. Judges will get to review all of the selected projects - this includes screening documentaries and viewing performances, if applicable. No additional interviews are conducted. All four judges will come to consensus about the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place ranking. Projects ranked 1st and 2nd will move on to the Maryland History Day State Contest. The project ranked 3rd will be an alternate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Judges A, B, C, and D sign the completed ranking sheet. The Judge Captain collects all scoring sheets and ranking sheet, and delivers them to the judge’s room when finished.</td>
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- Evaluations: Your evaluations should be based on the quality of the work, and most importantly on the historical quality. Evaluation criteria include **Historical Quality (60%)**, **Clarity of Presentation (20%)**, and **Relation to Theme (20%)**.
  
  - **Historical Quality (60%)**: Entries should include analysis and interpretation of the topic. Consider whether the student goes beyond the “what, when, and where” to explore the “why” of the topic and the broader historical context. In addition to providing basic information about the topic, entries must draw conclusions about significance in history.
  
  - **Clarity of Presentation (20%)**: Avoid being swayed by glitz. Your evaluation should be based on the clarity and appropriateness of the style of the entry for its particular category. Remember that the message is most important; the medium is not the message. By the same token, do expect an effective
and well organized presentation. Remember, this section is worth only 20% of the total evaluation; historical quality is most important.

- **Relation to Theme (20%)**: The 2019 National History Day theme is Triumph & Tragedy in History. Students should address this theme in their projects. Most topics will include elements of both triumph and tragedy, but some do not. If there is a clear connection to both in a topic, both should be addressed.

- Judges should discuss their evaluations among themselves so that individual comments on evaluation sheets do not contradict one another. While the rules are important and should be taken into consideration in the final ranking, you should not allow a minor rule infraction to determine the final ranking of the entry. Small infractions such as an error on the title page should not take an entry out of contention. However, such infractions should be noted on the evaluation sheets so that corrections may be made before the entry moves on to the next level of competition. Major rule infractions, such as size or time limit, should be considered in the final ranking. Use your judgment. If an entry exceeds the time or size limit to the extent that it contributes an advantage over the other entries (e.g., allows more information and interpretation), the rule infraction should be considered. Plagiarism is grounds for disqualification.

- **Evaluation sheets**: Each evaluation sheet has student information printed at the top. Please interview students in the order of the evaluation sheets in your envelope (that should match the list hanging outside the door and in your judging envelope). Please double check that the student(s) you are interviewing are those printed on the top of the sheet.

### Required Written Materials:

- **The Title Page** is required as the first page of written material in every category. It must include the title of the entry, the name(s) of the student(s), the contest division and category, and applicable word counts:
  - Paper category – number of words
  - Exhibit category – number of student-composed words on exhibit and number of words in process paper
  - Performance category – number of words in process paper
  - Documentary category – number of words in process paper
  - Website category – number of student-composed words in website and number of words in process paper (included on website homepage)

- The **Process Paper** that students must provide in the performance, documentary, exhibit, and website categories is a description of how the students went about the research and creation of the entry and concludes with an explanation of the topic's relationship to the theme. This should not be a research paper about the topic. A Process Paper is not required for the research paper category.

- The **Annotated Bibliography** is required for all categories.
  - The bibliography should be separated into primary and secondary sources. If you are unsure why a source has been classified as primary or secondary, ask the student during the interview.
  - The bibliographic style should be either the Modern Language Association (MLA) or Turabian. Regardless of which format is used, the style must be consistent.
  - The annotation should explain how the work was used in producing the entry and the student's rationale for classifying each source as primary or secondary. Evaluate students’ bibliographies based on the quality of their sources, not the quantity. Consider the breadth of the research appropriate to
the topic and a young person’s ability to investigate the sources (e.g., students cannot be expected to travel to archives abroad or to other states, translate material from other languages, etc.).

**Interviews and Comment Forms:**

- **Evaluation sheets:** Each evaluation sheet has student information printed at the top. Please interview students in the order of the evaluation sheets in your envelope (that should match the list hanging outside the door and in your judging envelope). Please double check that the student(s) you are interviewing are those on the top of the sheet.

- **Time Limit:** For a smooth and efficient competition, it is **essential** that judges keep to the time limit. Papers, exhibits, and websites are scheduled in 15-minute intervals. Performances and documentaries are scheduled in 20-minute intervals.

- **Absent group members:** Sometimes one or more group members will not be present for judging due to other activities such as band concerts, SAT exams, athletic events, etc. Of course, all students involved in individual projects and in the performance category must be present.

- **DOs and DON’Ts for Interviews**
  - **Do** turn off your electronic devices, put them away, and do not look at them during judging unless you need one for timing performances or documentaries.
  - **Do** welcome students in a friendly manner and help them feel comfortable.
  - **Do** be aware of your body language and comments, and behave in the same way with every entry you see. If you are excited by a topic or you don’t care for a particular topic, try not to show your enthusiasm or lack of enthusiasm. Students, teachers, and parents often draw conclusions by observing judges at work.
  - **Do** ask specific questions that encourage students to talk about their research.
  - **Do** write specific and constructive comments that students can use at the next level or in future projects.
  - **Do** provide consistent rankings and comments within the judging team.
  - **Do** spend an equal amount of time for each interview, ask similar questions about each entry, and direct questions to all members of group projects. The purpose of the interview is to clarify any concerns or questions you have and to provide some interaction between the professional and student. Ask something of substance regarding the topic. Sample questions include:
    - Why did you choose this topic?
    - What was your most important source and why?
    - How did your primary sources (or secondary sources) help you understand the topics?
    - Why is this topic/person significant?
    - What about your topic is relevant today?
    - What is the most important point you are trying to convey in your project?
    - What is the most important thing you learned in researching and developing your project?
    - What were the most important factors that caused ________ to occur?
    - What were the most important consequences of ________?
    - What impact did this event/person have on a community, society, the nation, or the world?
    - What conclusions or lessons do you want people to make as a result of your research?
    - What did each member of your group contribute? How did you decide who would do what?
    - What are some of the things you had to leave out? Would you like to talk about some of that information?
    - What is the most important thing you learned from this project? What skills did you learn as a result of this project?
• Don't lecture students during the interview about how to improve their projects – save helpful comments for the written evaluation sheets.

• Don’t ask what school the student attends, to avoid being swayed by the reputation of any particular school.

• Don’t stay in the room for judging or to discuss a project if you have a conflict of interest with the project topic.

• Don’t tell students whether or not they won before results have been announced at the awards ceremony.

• Don’t hold students to the same kind of standards to which you might hold graduate students or your colleagues. You will be evaluating the work of young students. At the same time, expect quality. History Day motivates students to conduct extensive research and develop superior critical thinking skills.

• Written comments: Since only a select number of projects receive awards, the only thing that most students will take with them from the contest is whatever encouraging words you have for their efforts and suggestions for improvement. Comments on the evaluation sheets should include constructive criticism and positive remarks. Justify your ranking of the project and provide specific suggestions, not just general comments such as “excellent work!” Do not make negative comments or lecture the students regarding their work. It is especially important for those students who do not win a prize to learn what they need to do the next time to be more successful.

Other Contest Details:

• Selecting Winners: For each category and division, there is a first place and second place winner. These winners will advance to the Maryland History Day contest. Your judging category will rank the top three projects, with the third-place project serving as an alternate.

• Finals (Runoffs): Sometimes, projects and divisions have so many entries that is impossible for one set of judges in one room to interview all of them. If your judging category is being interviewed in more than one room, you should work with the judges in your room to select the two best projects from your room when your interviews are complete. When all interviews from every room are complete, your captain will assemble all of the judges from every room to come to a consensus on the rankings – this is when you will submit your room’s top choices for consideration. As a whole group, you will review student work, including re-watching documentaries and performances if applicable. Please note that students do not come back for interviews in this second runoff round of judging. Please see the diagram on Page 2 for a sample judging process with more than one room.

• Returning paperwork: Please ensure that your completed comment forms are all turned in to your captain so that they can go back to the students to review.