

History Day in Connecticut

Web site Category

Frequently Asked Questions



How is a web site entry similar to or different from the other History Day categories?

In many ways a web site is similar to an exhibit. With a web site, however, it is easier to incorporate multimedia and you can include more words than you can in an exhibit (the word limit for exhibits is 500, the word limit for web sites is 1,200). Of course, the challenge for all History Day categories is to present a well-thought analysis and interpretation of a historical event, supported with balanced and appropriate sources.

To enter the web site category, what do I need to submit, where do I submit it, and when do I submit it?

After you register for your district contest, you must submit 4 copies of your web site (on 4 CD-Rs), process paper (printed copies), annotated bibliography (printed copies), and printouts of your web site to your district coordinator prior to the district contest so that judges will have the opportunity to review them ahead of time. Remember that your web site cannot actually be online. It must be self-contained on a CD-R. For a list of dates and deadlines, contact your district or state coordinator or visit www.chs.org/hist_day.

What should I bring with me to the History Day contest?

All contestants should bring an extra copy of their materials if they want to refer to them during their interview. In the case of web sites, this means the process paper, annotated bibliography, and a printout of the web site.

What are the size limitations for History Day web sites?

Web site 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 (see Rule 1).

Does the 1,200-word limit on visible, student-composed words include material in recurring menu bars, buttons, and other language that is technical or otherwise incidental to the interpretive content?

The 1,200-word limit pertains to student-composed words, not to links and menu bars, etc. Read Rule 1 carefully, and remember that your annotated bibliography should NOT be included on your web site, as it will count toward the word-limit.

I'm still confused about Rule 1. What does or does not count toward the 1,200-word limit?

The wording of Rule 1, especially concerning the use of citations, may be confusing. Words NOT counting towards the word limit include links, tags, and other necessary items used for building a web page, as well as endnotes or footnotes (which are required, see Rule 5). However, the last two sentences of Rule 1 refer to words that students use to credit sources. Therefore, if a student was citing the NHD rulebook as a source, "www.nhd.org/rulebook" would not count against the word limit, but "I got this item from NHD's web site" would.

Why do the web sites have to be viewed by Microsoft Internet Explorer (Rule 7)?

Internet Explorer is a very popular browser that many judges will have available to them. Requiring that students use this browser makes it easier to ensure that all of the judges can view the web site, no matter how much access they have to various technologies.

Why can't students use live links in their web sites (Rule 7)?

Directing judges to some one else's web site (meaning one not created by the student) can lead to seeing someone else's interpretation of the material being presented. The student's web site must be self-contained to show that the student has read and interpreted the researched material for him/herself. This also prevents students from circumventing the 1,200-word limit. There is one exception to this rule: if your web site uses a form of media that requires a plug-in, you may include a link to an Internet site where the plug-in can be downloaded.

How can I make my web site as interactive as possible?

Using thumbnail images in the design that link to larger images or documents is a commonly used feature. Some students use rollover or ALT text with images in order to match an image with a quote or fact. Of course the use of media segments including audio and video is also highly interactive.

Should I use a Mac or a PC to create my web site?

Your web site must be viewable by a recent version of Microsoft Internet Explorer (Rule 7). Microsoft does not offer Internet Explorer for Macs, but in most cases what you create using Mac software will be easily read by Internet

Explorer. Just make sure that you format your CDs so that your web site can be viewed on a PC. Before you send in your CDs to your district or state coordinator, test your CDs on a PC to be sure that they are compatible.

Can I create my web site in a program like Microsoft Publisher and then convert it into a web site?

Yes. Even Microsoft Word has the capability of converting a file into a web page. Just be sure you have correctly converted it into HTML format before you send in your CDs. A viewer must be able to open and navigate the web site with Internet Explorer. Do not send in a CD containing simply a Publisher file (or Word file, or whatever program you used to create your web site).

Do bibliographies go on the web site itself?

No. Students should hand in a paper version of the annotated bibliography. If it is added to the web site, it will count against a student's word limit.

At the History Day contest, how will the judging procedure work for web sites?

Web sites will be judged similar to the way historical papers are judged. The judges will interview the students in the web site category just as they do in the paper category. Students in the web site category will NOT present their web sites to the judges since the judges will have already viewed the web sites prior to the contest.

At the History Day contest, will my family, friends, and also strangers be able to view my web site?

Because this is the first year for the web site category for History Day in Connecticut, the public display of students' web sites may vary at each district contest and the state contest. Depending on the technology available, computers may be available for the public to browse the web site projects, or printouts of the web sites will be available for the public to look at (similar to how historical papers are displayed).

Where can I find examples of History Day web sites?

A few states have already implemented the web site category in past years, and so they do have examples of History Day web sites. However, because of copyright concerns, students are not encouraged to post their web sites online and therefore there are not many that can be viewed on the Internet. The best way to get an idea of what makes a great history-related web site is to explore the countless online exhibits created by museums and historical organizations around the world, such as the Library of Congress or the National Archives.

Is the web site category just an easy way for students to "cut and paste" images, audio, video, and text without having to do any original work?

According to Rule 18 of the General Rules in the NHD rulebook, plagiarism will result in disqualification. This applies, of course, to all History Day categories, not just web sites. The creative process for each category is different, which is part of the appeal of History Day – you can choose a category based on your particular interests and talents. But the most important components of a History Day project are thorough research, historical accuracy, analysis, and interpretation.

Are there any general tips to follow when creating a web site?

1. Don't forget that historical accuracy makes up 60% of the evaluation criteria. Research, analysis, and interpretation are the most important elements of your History Day project. Avoid the temptation of letting the web site technology monopolize your time. Content is more important than design.
2. Keep it simple. This medium offers the ability to incorporate a wide variety of advanced technologies such as audio, video, and advanced graphics. These items and their needed plug-ins and players may be common knowledge to you, but not others. Minimize the number of specialized plug-ins and downloads necessary for viewers to view your site. This will help to insure that others, particularly those evaluating your site, have a smooth experience. Keeping such items simple to use helps to make sure it works well.
3. Navigation is Crucial. Rule 2, which discusses a consistent navigational structure throughout the site, is there to do two things: 1) Make sure the viewer can move about your site as they wish and access all parts. 2) Provide the designer an effective mechanism for directing the viewer through the content. Use this rule to your advantage. It is the most powerful tool at your disposal for guiding the viewer through the sequence that you want them to follow. Whether using a vertical, horizontal, or other navigational structure, carefully select terms and/or graphics that help drive the sequence and ideas which you want the viewer to follow. Doing so will make ease-of-use the most effective presentation of your content.