



NATIONAL HISTORY DAY 2011
DEBATE & DIPLOMACY IN HISTORY:
SUCCESSSES, FAILURES, CONSEQUENCES



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Debate & Diplomacy in History: Successes, Failures, Consequences

National History Day 2011



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Debate & Diplomacy in History: Successes, Failures, Consequences

National History Day 2011



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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to 2011 National History Day!

This year we are introducing a new theme, *Debate and Diplomacy in History: Successes, Failures, Consequences*. At first glance, this theme may evoke topics of presidential debates and international affairs. However, look again, and think in terms of debates about civil liberties, reform movements, failed or successful international and domestic diplomatic missions. What about the debates at the center of any of the amendments to The Constitution or Supreme Court cases? Was diplomacy practiced in any of these cases? Students can investigate historically significant debates about sports, music, fashion, prohibition, and suffrage or the censorship of music, art or literature. Don't stop at American history! Juxtapose the same ideas against a world canvas and you will find historical topics abound.

The power of this theme is that students find the impact of historic debates and diplomacy on their lives. The caution is not to begin historical research in the present and trace the debate or the diplomatic mission backward; begin in the past. For example, immigration is a topic that is hotly debated today and has been continually questioned since our nation began; what should the nation's policy be on immigration? The answer to this question has changed over time because of the supply and demand for goods, cheap labor and available resources. From 1820 to the present the U.S. has had five distinct eras and policies on immigration. Any of these eras are steeped in possible research topics. If students are interested in the impact of immigration they may want to do a web site on the "Open Door" policy for immigrants during the years 1820–1880. Or if a student is interested in the time of the Chinese Exclusion Act they may want to create a performance about the "door ajar" era of immigration when immigration inspired a xenophobic reaction. This had a ripple effect in the entire economic system of the late 19th century. The debate must be studied during the particular time and place in history it began. The temptation for students is to study the modern day debate and bring in the historical story. Digging into a topic from its inception, examining the historical context and asking questions regarding the historical significance transforms a current event report into historical research.

Dayce, a middle school teacher from Wisconsin defined a good theme as, "one that allows for the widest range of topics. So many of my students are turned off by what we might call 'traditional' History Day topics, and they learn the most when they are able to find a topic that is of great personal interest and relates to the theme. Given that opportunity, even some of our most at-risk students do exceptionally well. And that is why we love National History Day. It offers tremendous learning opportunities even to those that don't think they want to learn."

Debate and Diplomacy in History: Successes, Failures, Consequences meets Dayce's criteria for a good theme. After all, have you ever met a teenager who didn't like a good debate or wasn't concerned with their civil liberties?!

Happy Researching and thanks Dayce!

Ann Claunch

Letter from the Editor

Historical Significance

Historical Significance is how something is important in terms of history. Ask yourself the key questions:

How was the event important at the time it happened? Did this importance continue throughout the generations? Did the event change history? Did we learn anything from it?

What is National History Day?

Contest Categories

You may enter one of five categories:

- Paper
- Exhibit
- Performance
- Documentary
- Web site

WHAT IS NATIONAL HISTORY DAY?

National History Day (NHD) is an opportunity for teachers and students to engage in real historical research. National History Day is not a predetermined by-the-book program but an innovative curriculum framework in which students learn history by selecting topics of interest and launching into a year-long research project. The purpose of National History Day is to improve the teaching and learning of history in American schools. NHD is a meaningful way for students to study historical issues, ideas, people and events by engaging in historical research. When studying history through historical research, students and teachers practice critical inquiry: asking questions of significance, time and place. Through careful questioning history students are immersed in a detective story too engaging to stop reading.

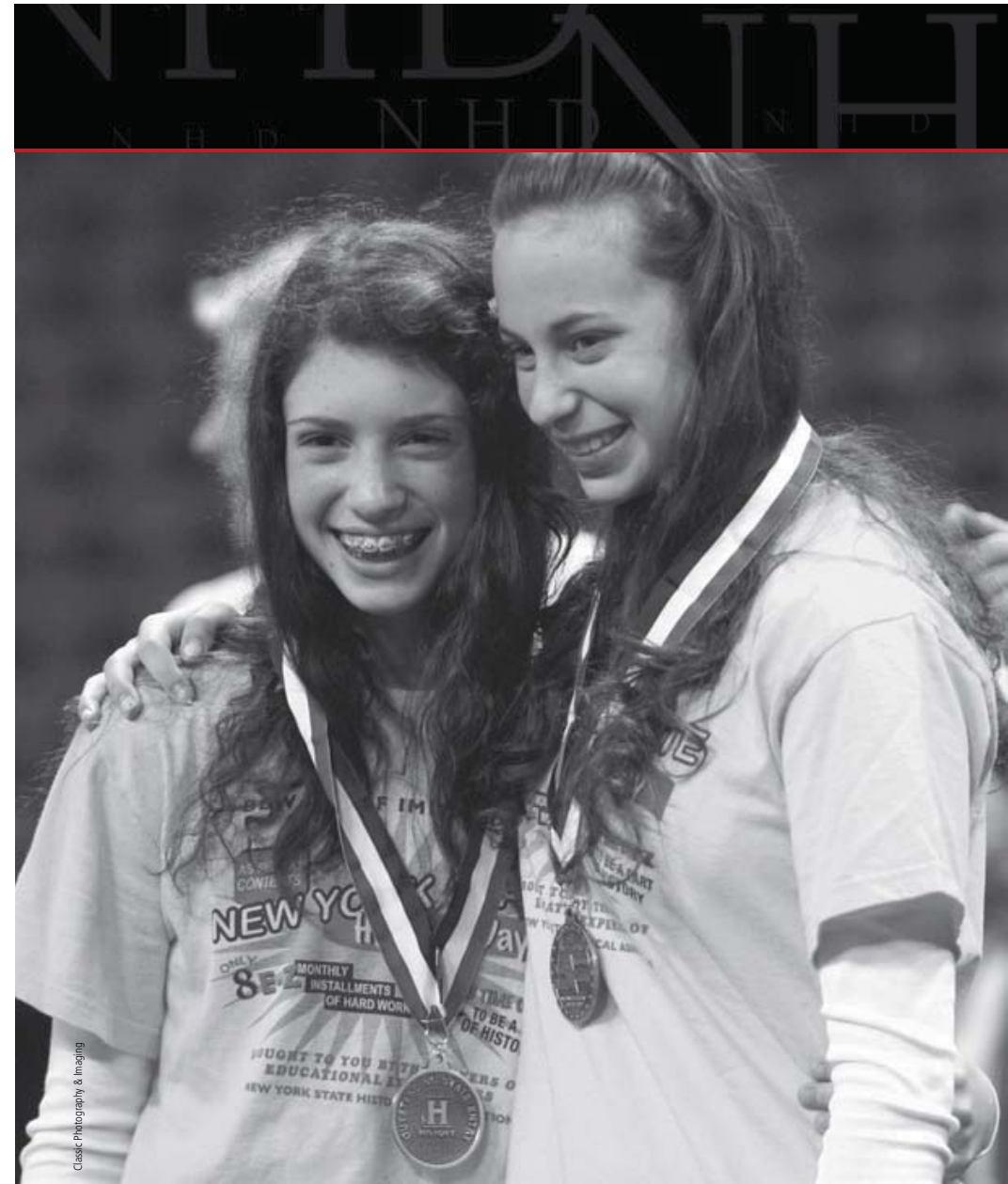
Beginning in the fall, students choose a topic related to the annual theme and conduct extensive primary and secondary research. After analyzing and interpreting their sources and drawing conclusions about their topics' significance in history, students then present their work in original papers, exhibits, performances, web sites and documentaries. These projects are entered into competitions in the spring at local, state and national levels where they are evaluated by professional historians and educators. The program culminates with the national competition held each June at the University of Maryland at College Park.

Each year National History Day uses a theme to provide a lens through which students can examine history. The theme for 2011 is *Debate and Diplomacy in History: Successes, Failures, Consequences*. The annual theme frames the research for both students and teachers. The theme is intentionally broad enough that students can select topics from any place (local, national or world history) and any time period. Once students choose their topics, they investigate historical context, historical significance, and the topic's relationship to the theme by conducting research in libraries, archives and museums, through oral history interviews, and by visiting historic sites.

NHD benefits both teachers and students. For the student, NHD allows control of his or her own learning. Students select topics from the broad theme that meet their interests. Program expectations and guidelines are explicitly provided for students, but the research journey is created by the process and is unique to the historical research. Throughout the year students learn about their heritage and develop essential life skills by fostering academic achievement and intellectual curiosity. In addition, students develop critical-thinking and problem-solving skills that will help them manage and use information now and in the future.

The student's greatest ally in the research process is the classroom teacher. NHD supports teachers by providing instructional materials and through workshops at the state and national levels. Many teachers find that incorporating the NHD theme into their regular classroom curriculum encourages students to watch for examples of the theme and to identify connections in their study of history across time.

History Day breathes life into the traditional history curriculum by engaging students and teachers in a hands-on and in-depth approach to studying the past. By focusing on a theme, students are introduced to a new organizational structure of learning history. Teachers are supported in introducing highly complex research strategies to students. When NHD is implemented in the classroom, students are involved in a life changing learning experience.



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National History Day 2011 Theme

DEBATE AND DIPLOMACY IN HISTORY: SUCCESSES, FAILURES, CONSEQUENCES

By Ann Claunch

Ann Claunch is the Director of Curriculum for National History Day.

Congratulations on your decision to become a National History Day Scholar! You are joining more than half a million students studying history by doing history! No longer will your knowledge of history be measured by the correct answers to the predetermined questions at the end of the chapter or how often you lug a 1,000 page history book home only to fall asleep, drooling on the couch, after two pages of the chapter. National History Day (NHD) wants you to become the historian! You decide on a topic. You find the sources. You determine the consequences based on the evidence. After you finish your research, you have a choice on how to tell the story. You may choose to create a historical performance, paper, web site, documentary or an exhibit. NHD puts you in control of your learning. Let's get started.

First, begin with the theme: *Debate and Diplomacy in History: Successes, Failures, Consequences*. If you have participated in National History Day before you know the theme is always broad enough to include research topics at the community, state, national or world history level. The theme is important because historical research requires more than a detailed description of an event. The theme helps you ask questions and think deeply about your topic. Examine the arguments for and against. Explain the historical consequences of the outcome of the debate or diplomatic event. Whose success is it? Whose failure? Excellent topics that are not connected to the theme can quickly become poor research projects.

The best way to understand the theme is to define each word. "Debate" and "Diplomacy" are broad categories. Your topic will be a debate or a diplomatic event. Sometimes you find a topic that fits under both debate and diplomacy, but that is not required. To understand all the possible meanings for the words go to the dictionary with a partner, think about different meanings and brainstorm possible research topics under each definition. The key to topic selection is the ability to articulate its connection to the theme.

What is the theme?

Each year a broad theme is selected for the National History Day contest. You may select a topic on any aspect of local, regional, national, or world history. Regardless of the topic chosen, your presentation of your research and conclusions must clearly relate to the annual theme. Be careful to limit the scope of your topic to make the research and interpretation of your topic manageable. In other words, narrow your topic to focus on an issue that can be explained and interpreted within the category limits of size and time.

What are examples of debates? A debate is defined as an argument, a dispute or a deliberation. Famous debates like the Lincoln/Douglas debates over slavery, Aristotle and Plato discussing "nature verse nurture" or the impact of the Kennedy/Nixon televised presidential debates on political campaigns are interesting topics. But so are debates concerning civil liberties.

Who should be allowed to vote? A paper or an exhibit on the 15th or the 19th amendments or a performance of Anna Howard Shaw's speech, *Fundamental Principles of Representation*, are excellent NHD projects. With this theme, the amendments to The Constitution or Supreme Court cases can be mined for topic ideas. CAUTION! Always think historically. Be careful not to focus on present day debates and don't forget local topics!

What about censorship? If you are interested in music you might consider a web site or an exhibit about the debate surrounding the innovative music in the 17th century of Johann Sebastian Bach or Giuseppe Verdi's suggestive opera lyrics in the 19th century. What about the 1955 debate proposing a connection with rock music and juvenile delinquency or The Buckley Report and the heated debate correlating listening to rock music and drug abuse?

Have you considered reform movements? New ideas introduced are always debated. You might write a paper about Hull House, the establishment of the Tuskegee Institute or the formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People or a web site about the

What is a Historical Documentary?

NHD documentaries present information about an event, person, place or idea from the past through a ten minute presentation that showcases documents, images, photographs, and actual footage of the topic you are researching. Your documentary needs to have both primary and secondary research but also be an original production.

controversy surrounding the publication of Upton Sinclair's book *The Jungle* or *A Red Record* by Ida B. Wells. From world history you can do a documentary on Martin Luther's *95 Theses* or *Emile* by John Jacque Rousseau.

How about women? What types of jobs should women be employed to do? Should both sexes have equal treatment under the law

and receive equal pay for the same job? In answers to these questions, you might create a documentary on the impact and legacy of Title IX legislation or a performance on the Seneca Falls conference. What about the change in women's fashion in the 1920s? A web site on the role of women in the 1830's or the debate surrounding Betty Friedan's book, *The Feminine Mystique*, in the 1960s are topic options.

What about diplomacy? Diplomacy is defined in the most simplistic terms as international affairs. When nations collide in ideological differences or battle over resources the result may demand a diplomatic solution. An international conference, a treaty or a summit of historical significance are examples of research topics related to Diplomacy in History. Although diplomacy usually evokes an international disagreement, be alert to other possibilities. Researching the early 18th century about land ownership in the United States and treaties with the Native Americans involved diplomacy and its consequences. The Black Hawk War of 1832 in the U.S. and The Lancaster Treaty of 1744 are examples of research topics that had immediate impact which resulted in a legacy of treatment.

What are national and international topic ideas? The Daytona Peace Accords, NAFTA, the Geneva Convention or Nixon's 1972 visit to China are international topics that changed history. Careful analysis of the Salt Treaties in a web site, a documentary on the Munich Agreement of 1938 or

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a paper on Ben Franklin's trip to England reveal varying diplomatic outcomes. What about the carefully orchestrated diplomatic pressure during the 1980s by President Ronald Reagan on Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev regarding The Berlin Wall and communism? Don't forget diplomatic topics on the national front. You might consider an exhibit on the impact of The Missouri Compromise or a web site about the Guadalupe Hildalgo land grant or a performance on the Smoot Holly Act or another trade agreement.

No matter what your interests are, you can find a historical topic to research with *Debate and Diplomacy in History: Successes, Failures, Consequences*. For instance, if you are interested in affairs of the state, you might create a performance on the impact of Albert J. Beveridge's "The March of the Flag" by exploring the debate between isolationists and interventionists in the Spanish American War. What about a paper on the two sides of the Cuban Missile Crisis? Was diplomacy a success? You might produce a documentary about the controversy over the use of the Atomic Bomb during World War II. How was the moral dilemma debated? Other possibilities are a paper or an exhibit explaining the debate over The League of Nations or the South East Asia Treaty. What happens when diplomacy fails?

The second part of the theme, "Successes, Failures, Consequences," can be used as a thinking backboard to bounce your topic off. These words help you analyze your topic by raising questions that you will need to answer as you research. What made your topic a success or a failure? Was it a success in the beginning and then later determined to be unsuccessful? For whom? Why or why not? Was an important group of people's voices silenced? And the most important word- consequences. How does your topic have long term impact? How did it change history? Your interpretation of the consequences and historical significance of your topic should be based on your research and supported by evidence. Always examine your topic for the short-term consequences and the long-term change.

Debate and Diplomacy in History: Successes, Failures, Consequences is an exciting theme because you can find topics everywhere. Start by talking to everyone about possible topic ideas and reading widely. Ask your parents, your teachers, your friends. You can search the internet. Peruse your textbook and your school library. Carry a notebook and write down ideas. When you have a list, circle the topics you want to know more about and go to the library to begin researching!

What is a Historical Exhibit?

Historical exhibition presents information about an event, person, place, or idea from the past by physically displaying documents, images, or objects. We often see such exhibits at museums, but they are also presented at many other places such as archives, historic sites, park visitor centers, classrooms, and even airports and train stations. For your National History Day project, you will tell the story of your research through historic photographs, maps, drawings and other interesting objects.

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- Popular Culture
- Business History
- Disability History
- North American Migrations
- Antebellum Slavery
- Military History
- American Religions
- The Lincoln Legacy
- Social Movements in the 1960s
- Black Power
- Teaching History with Music

FUTURE ISSUES INCLUDE:

- History of Technology
- The Cold War
- Colonial America
- The Civil War
- September 11
- Environmental History



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Sample Topics



National Archives and Records Administration



United States Library of Congress



National Archives and Records Administration

SAMPLE TOPICS

- Failed Diplomacy: Munich Agreement of 1938
- Lincoln Douglas Debates: Precursor to War
- Civil Rights Debated: Brown v. Board of Education
- Debated Diplomacy: The Cuban Missile Crisis
- Debated Instruments of Diplomacy: Wampum, Indian Peace Medals, and Treaties
- Music Debated: The Buckley Report
- Health v. Profits: The Pure Food and Drug Act Debated
- Segregation Debated and Changed: Little Rock Nine or the Ruby Bridges Story
- *Lone Wolf v. Hitchcock* (1903): Debated Rights
- A Diplomatic End for Whom? The Six Day War
- Anna Howard Shaw Speaks Out: Women's Rights Debated
- Debated Interest: Federal Reserve Act
- Diplomacy Refused: The 1953 American-Led Coup in Iran
- The Black Hills, Mount Rushmore and American Indians: Debated Land
- The Lost Battalion: Diplomacy at Versailles
- Nature v. Nurture: Child Rearing Debated
- Dayton Peace Accords: A Diplomatic Balance
- Ping Pong Diplomacy: Nixon's 1972 Visit to China
- *Kill the Indian and Save the Man*: The Impact of Indian Boarding Schools: Debated Philosophies
- The Iran Hostage Crisis: When Diplomacy Fails
- Censorship of Lyrics: Giuseppe Verdi's Opera
- Civil Rights Act 1964: Congressional Debate
- The Indian Reorganization Act of 1934: Debated New Deal for Native Americans
- Yalta: Reshaping the World through Diplomacy
- Food Processing Debated: The Jungle
- Clayton Antitrust Act: Debating Monopolies
- Dropping the Bomb: Moral Debate
- Pakistan and Israeli Conflict of 1968: Failed Diplomacy
- Poll Tax, Literacy Test, Grandfather Clause: Suffrage Debates
- Irish, Italians, Chinese: Debated Citizenship
- Gender Debated: Who should learn what and how much?
- Hepburn Act: Railroad Rates Debated
- Federal Trade Commission: Fair Business Trade Debated
- Equal Right Amendment, Equal Employment Opportunity Act or Title IX of Educational Amendment Act: Equality Debated
- Women's Fashion Debated in the Gilded Age: Broadening Boundaries—Shrinking limitations
- Diplomacy as a Postponement to the Inevitable: The Constitutional Convention and the question of slavery
- Ben Franklin's Diplomatic Mission to England: Failed diplomacy/successful revolution
- Independence Debated: Consequences for the Colonies
- Debated Currency: Battle Between Silver and Gold Standards (1896)
- Geneva Convention: Successful and Sustained Diplomacy
- Diplomacy after Conflict: Northern Ireland and England
- Failed Debate: President Woodrow Wilson and The League of Nations
- Fish-ins for Salmon: Debated Treaty Promises, Indians, and Fishing Rights in the Northwest

Suggested Teaching Idea: Debate and Diplomacy Semantic Map

Debate and Diplomacy in History Worksheet

For the Teacher: In the diagram below, demonstrate to students how to expand a topic and explore successes, failures and consequences, using The Constitutional Convention and The Yalta Conference as examples.

Next, ask pairs of students to select two or three topics on the sample topic list on page 10. Working together, students conduct preliminary research and complete the form by adding information about the topics that were selected. Finally, the students present the topics they researched and what was discovered.

	TOPIC	SUCCESSSES	FAILURES	CONSEQUENCES
DEBATE	Constitutional Convention 1787	The Constitutional Convention succeeded in continuous unity of the nation	The Constitutional Convention ignored the slavery question	Civil War
DIPLOMACY	Yalta Conference	Yalta Conference succeeded in bringing the U.S., England and Russia into diplomatic dialogue	U.S. and Britain compromised too much resulting in the establishment of the Eastern Block	Spread of Communism



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BEGINNING THE YEAR WITH PRIMARY SOURCES

By Ann Claunch

Ann Claunch is the Director of Curriculum for National History Day.

National History Day changes lives. All students, from AP to those who read their last book during the first Bush administration, report that NHD was the most profound experience in their mid school and high school years. We have pages of testimonials and are in the midst of conducting a national evaluation with preliminary results confirming National History Day is an extraordinary learning program for all types of learners. With this endorsement, why would any teacher say “no” to implementing NHD in the classroom? Two reasons surface immediately. First, the time and hard work it takes to support students in quality research, and secondly, the complexity of the program. The work load is the teacher’s decision, but any NHD teacher will quickly counter with, the rewards of student learning outweigh any extra work. The complexity of the program may seem daunting but there are a network of veteran NHD teachers ready to help.

To support all teachers in beginning the program and to eliminate some of the initial questions on how to get started, I have collected three lesson plans from veteran NHD teachers to start the year. The lesson ideas are meant to provide ideas and do not have to be presented in a sequence. Pick and choose what fits your classroom best or use all three.

History Show and Tell: This is an activity through which two students in each class period bring something from their personal history to share with the class. They explain what the artifact is, the research on the artifact, and the approximate date of use or publication. You will find students bring a wide variety of artifacts from home: old photographs, Civil War memorabilia, typewriters, and grandmother’s bellbottoms from the 1960s. Teachers begin a timeline around the room where students post a picture of the artifact and the family story and the research designating the approximate time of use. Often, the research begins to dispel family history myths. Send home a disclaimer not to bring anything for this assignment that can be broken, destroyed or cannot be replaced, or any type of weapon. You can work with students to define what history means in the beginning or leave it open-ended and construct a definition after the first round where all students have brought in a family artifact.

Mr. Lincoln’s Pockets: The Library of Congress has an exhibit of what was in Mr. Lincoln’s pockets the night he was assassinated (<http://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/0012/bicentennial.html>). As visitors look at the pair of small spectacles folded in a silver case, the ivory pocketknife, a brass sleeve button, the fancy watch fob or eight newspaper clippings praising him, we begin to get a sense of the man and the time in which he lived.

On the first day of school, talk about the exhibit and the reasons we might find things in a pocket interesting to history. Then ask students to search in their own pockets, backpacks or purses and introduce themselves with the artifact and tell how it reflects who they are as a person. Be sure to add the criteria that anything they show should be something they would be proud to show the principal as well.

Thinking about Primary Sources: Sometime after the first week of school, ask students to do a quick writing of everything that has happened in class during the first week. Instruct them to write like a historian with detail. Collect the papers as students are finished. Check the papers as you collect the stories for appropriate content and language. When everyone has finished, hold the papers together and say to the students, “We have a complete history of the

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Beginning the Year with Primary Sources

What is a Primary Source?

The most basic definition of a primary source is something that was written or produced during the time period that a student is investigating. Primary sources are materials directly related to a topic by time or participation. These materials include letters, speeches, diaries, newspaper articles from the time, oral history interviews, documents, photographs, artifacts, or anything else that provides first-hand accounts about a person or event. This definition also applies to primary sources found on the Internet. A letter written by President Lincoln in 1862 is a primary source for a student researching the Civil War era. A newspaper article about the Battle of Gettysburg written by a contemporary in July 1863 would be a primary source; but an article about the battle written in June 2001 probably was not written by an eyewitness or participant and would not be a primary source. The memories of a person who took part in the battle also can serve as a primary source. He or she was an eyewitness to and a participant in this historical event at the time.

However, an interview with an expert (a professor of Civil War history, for example) is not a primary source UNLESS that expert actually lived through and has first-hand knowledge of the events being described (highly unlikely for a Civil War historian!).

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class for the first week. Although each of you might have a different perspective, when I look at the class as a set we can piece together the history of our work together over this first week."

Now the drama begins. With the students watching your every move, take one third of the student histories and place them into a drawer or a cabinet and tell them that these accounts will no longer be available because of a revisionist government. When the government has had enough time to examine them and have committees rewrite them according to policy, they will be released and made available to the public.

Two thirds of the documents remain. Sort through the documents quickly and explain how the most recent catastrophic event (Nor'easter, fire, tornado, hail-storm, earthquake, etc.) in your town activated the sprinkler system in the school and these documents were soaked with fluid and ruined. Sorry, they will no longer be available due to a series of catastrophic events that are out of our control. Place another pile in a drawer or folder.

The final third of the documents are now considered. They contain the surviving stories of the history of this classroom. Within these pages are the words, feelings, memories, and significant events of our class. But...terrorism reared its ugly head in our town and the documents that once told the story of a classroom's history were destroyed in the scuffle that resulted when an intruder had to be apprehended by the SWAT team. Only one document remains. Set aside all but

one student document. Explain how this one surviving history is about to become the "official history" of this class. Ask the class to carefully listen to the official history, as told by one class historian (member). Upon finishing the recitation of the story, ask students to consider how the story they wrote (and experienced) was similar to and different from the story they just heard.

Other questions to consider:

1. Consider each person's location/geography in the classroom... does that make a difference?
2. Consider whether the person was a male or a female...does that make a difference?
3. Consider the completeness of the account. Did it include the highlights? What did it leave out?
4. Consider the "voice" used in the description. Did it match yours? How did it differ?
5. After a bit of discussion...magically, make a second student history available. VOILA! Archeologists in the future found a second surviving history! What luck!!! Read the second history aloud and encourage more comparing and contrasting.

The lessons are focused on helping students understand primary sources and how they are used to tell the story of history.

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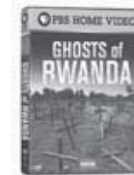
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Suggested Teaching Idea: NHD Rule Book Bingo

National History Day Rule Book Bingo

Purpose: To provide an introduction to the NHD rule book.

This activity can be done with a paper copy of the rule book or on the computer. Instruct students that the game is completed like Bingo. All questions in a row or a column must be completed. Students may choose to answer questions diagonally. Another option is to play "Black Out" where students answer all the questions. Students may play the game individually or in small groups.

What is the word limit on the exhibit board? Is it the same for the web site?	Can I have seven friends in my group? If not, how many?	I would like to include a stuffed rattlesnake in my exhibit. Can I?	Can I dress up like Benjamin Franklin and have my friend interview me for my documentary?	Where do I find information about how to cite books and photographs for my research?
I am 12 and in 6th grade. Does this mean I have to compete with seniors in high school? Why or Why not?	What do I bring with me to the judges' interview?	Can I do a documentary and an exhibit about my topic?	My exhibit is so heavy it takes 3 people to carry it. Can I have my parents help me set it up at the contest?	If I have a slide show with my exhibit, does the narration count as part of the word count?
I want to put my grandmother's diamond necklace with my exhibit. How can I make sure it doesn't get stolen?	What is historical context?	How do I do end credits for my documentary?	What is a primary source?	I got this great interview last year. Can I do another topic but use the same interview?
How long should my speech be for the judges?	If I read the rule book two years ago, do I need to read the rules again?	Can I wear my 15th century pants to my documentary?	What is plagiarism?	Can I bring a live animal to my performance?
What is the theme?	Can I make a six foot rocket as my exhibit board?	What questions will the judges ask me during the interview about my web site?	Do quotes count in the word count of a paper?	What is the most important rule to remember when doing historical research for National History Day?

Answer Key: www.nhd.org/images/uploads/2009rulebook.pdf



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HISTORY's Best Resources Teacher Resources

HISTORY'S BEST RESOURCES FOR DEBATE AND DIPLOMACY: SUCCESSES, FAILURES, CONSEQUENCES

By Kimberly Gilmore

Kimberly Gilmore is a historian for HISTORY.™

In 1814, The Treaty of Ghent was signed after 5 months of heated, detailed negotiations and after more than 2 years of bitter warfare between the United States and Britain. A cadre of American leaders including Henry Clay and John Quincy Adams helped bring an end to the War of 1812 through this peace treaty signed and sealed in Belgium. The news of this hard-fought triumph of diplomacy, however, would take weeks to wend its way back to the battlefronts on U.S. soil. As information that the war had ended snaked its way west, General Andrew Jackson was furiously assembling a rag tag band of soldiers to take on the British in New Orleans. This battle, which took place on January 8, 1815, proved to be a decisive victory for the Americans, and cemented Jackson's place as a national leader and war hero. This battle which took place after the war had officially ended, is a classic example of the surprising twists of history; diplomacy prevailed, but there were unintended consequences with results that could be described as both success and failure, depending upon the vantage point of those analyzing the outcome.

As this one example from the War of 1812 suggests, the 2011 National History Day theme provides a rich set of concepts for students to explore. *Debate and Diplomacy: Successes, Failures, Consequences* allows students to think critically about world politics, important historical turning points, and the methods leaders use to communicate. In addition to examining the broad strokes of history, this theme also opens up the possibility for students to look between the cracks of the common stories historians tell and to think creatively about how everyday moments of misunderstanding, of surprising connection, or of innovative argument have changed the course of history. Whether at the top levels of government or in the most local settings, analyzing the terms and methods of debate and diplomacy can help students understand how and when historical transformation occurs.

HISTORY's documentary video archive related to the 2011 theme is extensive. Whether students choose a world history topic related to major events such as war and international negotiation or a U.S. history topic about a single event or person, students will find a deep well of documentary video to inform their projects. HISTORY has a wealth of video resources available online and on air to provide insights into the NHD theme and spark ideas for projects among students. Research is a critical component of each National History Day project, whether students are working on a performance, a paper, an exhibit, a web site or a documentary. For each of these categories, having a visual perspective on the topic can jump start a student project or can help students grasp new angles on the topics they have already chosen.

Analyzing a topic for an NHD project is an important part of the process for students. In recommending documentaries to students, presenting them with a multiplicity of perspectives is an excellent way to open them up to a range of topics, and to remind them that viewing many sides of a story is critical to doing good history spade work. The ability to discern the differences between viewpoints and approaches to decision-making is a skill students can learn by considering a variety of interpretations about an event, person, or time period. For example,

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investigating Richard Nixon's diplomatic legacy would require attention not only to criticisms of his policies during the Vietnam War, but also to the significance of his 1972 visit to China.

Whenever students feel like they have enough sources about a topic, challenge them to find one more!

I can provide a few examples of useful documentaries for the 2011 NHD theme, along with some ideas for how to use documentary video to elucidate a range of projects. U.S. Presidents have always inspired fascination among students and history readers in general. From their quirky habits to their most meaningful decisions, these leaders help define our national moments and character in any given era. Presidents have often been right in the line of fire politically, debating, discussing, and brokering change, both politically and socially. The HISTORY series entitled *The Presidents* peers back into the world of each of these leaders, describing their key contributions to American diplomacy. The series also presents these leaders not just as power brokers, but as humans whose family lives, interests and historical contexts shaped their decision-making process. This series is a prime way to introduce students to the broad sweep of American Presidencies, with many nuggets of information they can use to seed a more detailed exploration of the important areas of diplomacy and debate each of them participated in throughout their years in office. With short segments on each leader, this series offers an illustration of how documentaries that provide a synthesis of an expansive set

topics can give students many doors to open as they try to find their history niche.

We all know that students often relate to those who have resisted against the currents of their time, or have presented authorities with their own vision of social justice through their words and actions. *The People Speak* is a new 90 minute film based on Howard Zinn and Anthony Arnove's collection entitled *Voices of a People's History*. The film features some of our nation's most revered actors and musicians, including Matt Damon, Benjamin Bratt, Marisa Tomei, Lupe Fiasco, Bruce Springsteen, Eddie Vedder, and many more as they read and perform statements and songs of those who have spoken up for social change throughout

Whenever students feel like they have enough sources about a topic, challenge them to find one more!

U.S. history. From Frederick Douglass to the mill girls of Lowell, Massachusetts to the Civil Rights protestors of the 1960s, history springs to life in *The People Speak* as these performers embody the voices of Americans who have pushed the nation to live up to its promises. Chronologically, this program stretches from the earliest days of European encounters in the Americas through the contemporary period. Students looking for an NHD project related to the themes of debate will find a goldmine in this program which touches on social movements throughout U.S. history. I think this film also gives students a fresh understanding of history as a process in motion, and to see some of their favorite performers take history seriously is inspirational.



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The Presidents and *The People Speak* are just 2 examples of documentaries that will give students some suggested starting points for their projects. Even if the content in these programs doesn't end up playing a role in their own projects, I think these films are examples of programs that can elicit excitement about the possibilities in historical research this theme presents. Don't forget! The collective wisdom of teachers, students, NHD staff, and affiliate coordinators who have worked on projects over many years is one of the best resources for delving into new projects. Much of this information can be accessed online at www.nhd.org; below are a few more starter tips for engaging with the 2011 NHD Theme.

Look for a unique angle on well-known stories

The category *Debate and Diplomacy* may draw many students toward topics in political history. This is a great opportunity for students to learn more about international relations and to consider events from the perspective of the citizens and leaders of other nations. While many debates and major political decisions may seem like well-worn territory, students can be encouraged to look for aspects of these stories that have remained untold. The opening of Cold War archives, new information about the Civil Rights movement, and the on-going discovery of new archives made available online open up the book on historical events that might previously been considered "case closed."

Web sites

Visit www.history.com to view streaming video clips and find more background information about topics. To find speeches, debates, and other related video clips go to www.history.com/video.

The National Archives *Our Documents* site at www.ourdocuments.gov is an excellent first stop for U.S. history documents and tips for analyzing primary sources.

The World Digital Library developed by the Library of Congress with UNESCO is available at www.wdl.org and offers primary source materials from countries from around the world.

The Smithsonian Institution web site at www.si.edu is a portal to extensive online collections and background information on U.S. and world history topics.

Books

Cohen, Michael A. *Live from the Campaign Trail: the Greatest Presidential Campaign Speeches of the Twentieth Century and How They Shaped Modern America*. New York: Walker & Company, 2008.

Foner, Eric. *Give Me Liberty!: An American History, One-Volume Edition*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004.

Stearns, Peter. *World History in Documents: A Comparative Reader (2nd edition)*. New York: New York University Press, 2008.

Winkler, Allan. *The Cold War: A History in Documents*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Zinn, Howard. *A Young People's History of the United States*. New York: Seven Stories Press, 2007.

We all know that students often relate to those who have resisted against the currents of their time, or have presented authorities with their own vision of social justice through their words and actions...history springs to life in *The People Speak* as...performers embody the voices of Americans who have pushed the nation to live up to its promises.

Ask a Historian Series: Finding the Winning Formula

The key to a successful NHD entry is context...

Without context, you will fall into the description trap. You may know every detail of an event and can describe it impeccably. However, the details are only the raw ingredients of history. You have to place them into context to draw meaning about impact and change. No context? No contest. It's that simple.

ASK A HISTORIAN SERIES: FINDING THE WINNING FORMULA

By Cathy Gorn

Cathy Gorn is the Executive Director of National History Day.

I am occasionally asked by teachers and students if I can tell them how to win. The answer is a resounding "No." I can't do that. In addition to solid research, thoughtful analysis and creative presentation (not to mention adherence to the theme), as with any competition, winning involves an element of luck. It can hinge on the judges you were lucky (or unlucky) to get; on the judging room—temperature, number of competitive entries, size; on the amount of sleep you got the night before and if you have a cold or the flu (no pig jokes here); on being forgetful in a performance, the breakdown of equipment in documentaries, or sticky stuff that comes unstuck in an exhibit. And, of course, the moon has to be in the right phase and Jupiter must align properly with Mars.

Those who want "to know how to win" are usually looking for a formula, such as a song in a performance. Back in the old days of History Day, the early 1990s, a group that won at nationals incorporated song into their performance. The kids had great voices and wowed the audience which gave them a standing ovation. The next year, everybody was singing! Word was out: if you want to win in the performance category, you have to have a song. Now, suddenly, right in the middle of a performance, students would break out into song, and sometimes it seemed for no apparent reason but to include a song and wow 'em with a beautiful voice. Needless to say, a song did not always guarantee a winning entry.

When does a song work? Well, it worked for that first group of singing students because they didn't use it for effect by itself; they used song because it fit the topic and their approach to it. The topic was on labor history and the songs were International Workers of the World (IWW) labor songs. It worked because the songs were carefully placed in the performance and did not overwhelm, nor take up, most of it. It worked because it explained their topic's relation to the theme within the context of the time. They won because they conducted exhaustive and careful research, clearly explained their topic's significance in history and backed it up with solid evidence.

So, I cannot tell you how to win or provide an equation that will result in a winning entry. But I can tell you how to be a better historian and thus become more successful at NHD.

The key to a successful NHD entry is context—historical context. The NHD Rule Book defines historical context as "the intellectual, physical, social and cultural setting in which events take place." And I'd throw in economic and political settings as well. In other words, historical context is the atmosphere of the time. Without it, you can't understand your topic's place in history and its impact on the course of human events. Without context, you will fall into the description trap. You may know every detail of an event and can describe it impeccably. However, the details are only the raw ingredients of history. You have to place them into context to draw meaning about impact and change. No context? No contest. It's that simple.

OK, that was easy to say, but it's a little more difficult to accomplish. It involves a lot of secondary source reading—background reading about the time in which the topic takes place. Here's an example from 2005 when the theme was *Communication in History*. That year, the Navajo Code

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It involves a lot of secondary source reading—background reading about the time in which the topic takes place.

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Talkers was a popular topic. The Code Talkers were Native American soldiers in the U.S. Army during World War II. They used their native Navajo language as code to send signals which the enemy could not decipher. Their contribution was significant in the outcome of battles and ultimately the war. But most of the entries on the Code Talkers that I saw that year stopped after describing what they did. Entries rarely explained the Code Talkers' significance.

In March of that year, I attended a regional contest at which a teacher approached me after the awards ceremony. She said her students were once again successful at the regional level and were going on to the state contest in May. But, she said, they had never been able to make it on to the national contest. "Can you tell us how to win at state?" she asked. You already know my answer: "no, I cannot tell you how to win." However, I told her, I can explain how students can be more successful and asked to see her students' senior group exhibit on, you guessed it, the Navajo Code Talkers.

Their exhibit was well put together. It was attractive and thoughtfully constructed. It was clear that they had done a lot of research on the history of the Navajos. The exhibit had four panels. On the first was a history of ancient Navajos. On the second was information related to their conquest and placement on reservations. On the third were a few photos of the Code Talkers at their equipment, sending out code; the captions included quotes from generals stating that the Code Talkers played an important role in the war effort. And on the fourth panel were photos of the surviving Code Talkers receiving medals of honor in 2004 by President George W. Bush.

My first reaction was to ask what was the significance of the Code Talkers in WWII? I couldn't tell by looking at the exhibit. Some generals said they made a difference, but how? Why? To what extent? What were the results? The exhibit told me all about the Navajos and explained that some of the Navajos were Code Talkers, but not much more than that. So what? So, they did a good job, according to the generals. That's nice, but so what? Did they contribute to a change in the course of events of a battle or on the direction of the war?

What was the problem here? The students failed to focus and they failed to examine the historical context in which the Code Talkers operated. With all the research that they had done, how did they miss the context? I opened their extensive bibliography and went straight to secondary sources (yes, we historians love the primary stuff, but it's the secondary stuff that provides the context). There wasn't a book or article on World War II! So, I told them to brace themselves because my advice would be blunt, but if they wanted to do well at the state contest, they needed to heed my words:

- First, go to the library and read secondary works on World War II—general books; books about battles; books about minorities in the war, etc.
- Second, ask questions about the Code Talkers' role in turning the tide of a battle and the war
- Third, strip the board; it was out of focus as is and would need a complete restructuring
- Fourth, focus on the results of the Code Talkers' efforts—therein lies the historical significance of their work and the answer to the question, "So What?"

Panel three was the key to the success of the exhibit. The other panels provided some background that could be condensed into a few sentences. The focus had to be on the Code Talkers' efforts and the results of those efforts.

The students looked like deer in the headlights. I wished them luck and then lost track of them among the hundreds of thousands of students who take part in NHD each year. But at the national contest, as I was walking through the hall, I felt a tap on my shoulder. There they were with big smiles, pointing to themselves, "Remember us?! Remember us?! We made it! We made it!" They made it because they found the context. Their exhibit had changed and was now focused on how the efforts of the Navajo Code Talkers had changed the course of battle and thus had a significant impact on the course of the war. Bravo!

The key to a successful entry is not only historical context, but also historical significance. So your choice of topic also is critical for a solid NHD project. Remember, everything has a history but not everything is historically significant. To be successful with your NHD project, you must look for historical significance and provide evidence from your research to back up your assertions. Here is a good example.

The key to a successful entry is not only historical context, but also historical significance.

...Remember, everything has a history but not everything is historically significant.

In 2002, the theme was *Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History*. That year, after their children failed to win at their state contest, the parents sent me a copy of their documentary and bibliography, insisting that their children's work was superior and that the judges' decision be overturned. Their documentary was on the



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Is there a formula to winning at History Day?

Yes and No.

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Beatles. It was creative and had a great beat, featuring many of the Beatles' most popular songs. They had done interviews and listened to every Beatles recording and viewed every movie. But, like the Code Talkers example, their bibliography not only lacked secondary sources, it lacked historical sources—there wasn't a history book on the list! Because they had failed to look at the history of the 1960s, they failed to choose the right topic. Their documentary focused on the Beatles' impact on music and how the way they used chord changes had an impact on future music. Well, this in and of itself was not wrong, but it wasn't historical. The study of history is about the study of society and the course of human events. If they had entered "Musicology Day" they would have done well, but they entered History Day. Had they looked at history books of the time period in which the Beatles hit the scene, they might have found that a better topic would be the student movement and the role of music, including the

Beatles' influence. Why were the Beatles a phenomenon in the 1960s? Why didn't it happen in the 1950s? What happened in the music industry in the decades before to make the time ripe for a music explosion? What role did music play in the Civil Rights and anti-war movements of the 1960s? What effect did music have politically, socially, or economically in American society or the world? These are some of the crucial questions that should have been asked and answered.

So, is there a formula to winning at History Day? Yes and No. No, if you are looking for an equation that will guarantee a consistent result: step one plus step two equals a medal. Yes, if you want to equate winning as a great learning experience. Here it is...select a topic of personal interest, read widely about the time period, dig deeply into primary sources, and don't forget the CONTEXT!

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