

## Characteristics of History Fair Projects

*History Fair projects typically fall into three different categories. By learning how to identify the characteristics of their projects, students will be better equipped to revise and improve them at each level of the academic competitions.*



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### **Historical Argument:**

This superior project begins with a clear introduction and thesis, and then develops its argument through step-by-step use of primary and secondary sources as evidence. It grapples with complexity and the multiplicity of factors involved in any historical topic. It reveals how and why things change, and the political, social, economic, and cultural factors involved. It also situates the topic in its historical context and within the context of U.S. or world history. Finally, the project's conclusion is more than a summary of the argument and evidence presented; it addresses the historical significance of the topic, what we learn about society and change, implications for the present.

**Typical Score: 100-89 points [Superior]**

*Example of Typical Title:*

*"Hull House and the Labor Movement: How Progressives Helped Turn the Tide for Immigrant Workers"*

### **Tell A Story:**

A project in this category is a major improvement from a "Collection of Facts," because has a narrow focus, offers a solid story or explanation, and demonstrates a high level of knowledge. What separates it from a superior project is the need for a strong argument about why and how something happened (or didn't), its impact and significance, and the larger historical context. Instead, the project tends to describe more than analyze or reflect an "appreciation" of a topic. It may use "the only" or "the most important" or "changed everything" to justify its importance.



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**Typical Score: 88-75 points [High to Low Excellent]**

*Example of Typical Title:*

*"The Role of Hull House in the Labor Movement"*

### **Collection of Facts:**

These projects consist of a series of pictures with descriptive captions that read like a guide, brochure, or glorified timeline. Often, there is no narrative or little logic to the order in which the topic is being presented. Often topics are overly broad, such as *Chicago Architecture* or *Jane Addams*. Instead, try to narrow the focus and pose a historical question that the project then attempts to answer.



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**Typical Score: 75-70 points [Good]**

*Example of Typical Title:*

*"The Many Achievements of Jane Addams"*