

Documentary Category Rules

Documentaries allow students to communicate an argument through a script and support it with visual evidence drawn from primary and secondary sources. To produce a documentary, students must have access to editing equipment and be able to operate it.

Documentary Rules

- ✧ Documentaries are created by individuals or groups of no more than five students.
- ✧ Documentaries may not exceed ten minutes in length. Time begins when the first image or sound appears and ends after the last visual/sound concludes. The length of the documentary must be provided on the Summary Statement.
- ✧ Documentaries must be researched, created, narrated, and produced by the students registered (e.g. no external narrators). Students must operate all equipment used in the production of the project. Only those students listed as entrants may participate in the documentary's production.
- ✧ Students may use *pre-existing* photographs, video excerpts, music, etc. in their film with proper acknowledgment in the credits and Annotated Bibliography. However, students may not use material created by others specifically for their History Fair project (for example, an adult could not craft a musical or visual piece specifically to be used in the student's project; "actors" should not provide dramatization).
- ✧ Documentaries conclude with a brief list of credits for major audio and visual sources only, not full citations. The Annotated Bibliography and Summary Statement must be printed for the judges and do not appear on the documentary. All sources used in the documentary must be properly cited in the bibliography.
- ✧ Documentaries are self-running. Live narration and other comments before or during the project are not permitted. PowerPoint projects, podcasts, and "performances on film" are not appropriate in the documentary category.
- ✧ Students are allowed five minutes to set up and five minutes to remove equipment. Students should operate the equipment independently. Adults should not assist with set up of equipment. Students should use set-up time to prepare the documentary for presentation (adjust volume, etc.).
- ✧ Students must properly "burn" or save the documentary so that it can play on any machine (see below for more details).
- ✧ See also: "Rules for All Categories" on p. 3.

DOCUMENTARY PENALTY POINTS (*High School only*)

High School documentaries that violate the rules will be subject to penalty point deductions. Junior Division documentaries will not receive separate penalties.

- ✧ Exceeds time limit: Minus 2 points for exceeding ten minutes, plus 2 points for each full minute thereafter (10 point maximum penalty)
- ✧ Bibliography not annotated: Minus 5 points
- ✧ No Summary Statement: Minus 10 points
- ✧ No bibliography: 0 points in the sources category

Documentary Competition Notes

All documentaries will be judged from DVDs or USB Flash drives. It is recommended that students bring copies on both media for judging. Consider testing it on a variety of machines before the contest.

The best final format for a documentary is a DVD. MP4, AVI, or WMV file, *published and burned* to a DVD. On Flash drives, the movie should be saved—not the individual files. Students may bring their own computers to the contest (if Apple laptops or tablets are brought, students are responsible for bringing their own adapter for the projector).

Please bring three copies of the following materials to the contest along with the documentary:

- ◆ Summary Statement
- ◆ Annotated Bibliography, (see p. 4)

Students may be asked to leave a copy of their documentary with the judges for History Fair purposes, but it is not required—please label it with title and/or student names.

Written materials should be printed on plain white paper and stapled together (no binders). Judges will ask to keep at least one copy of the written materials. The presentation concludes with a brief interview with the judges.

Documentary Guidelines

[See "[HF Project Guides](#)" → "Documentaries" on the History Fair website for further guidance and examples.]

- ✧ Spend time watching and analyzing documentaries, such as those available on PBS. Pay attention to the elements, narrative, and structure of these documentaries to see how the professionals successfully communicate their ideas through this medium.
- ✧ A documentary uses visual evidence such as photographs, maps, film clips, interviews, and other graphic images. Subtitles, quotations, and other highlights are appropriate, but the presentation should not rely heavily on printed text. While technical and creative quality are important, they do not outweigh the need for solid historical knowledge and analysis.
- ✧ Clips from existing documentaries should be used sparingly. Overuse or long segments of footage from a professional production are discouraged. Most importantly, History Fair documentaries should present students' own interpretations.
- ✧ Audio can be a mix of student narration, interviews, and music. Speak at a steady pace. Soundtracks are best when relevant to content and volume does not distract from the voiceover. When using interviews that are hard to understand, consider subtitles. Ask different people to listen to the documentary to make sure all types of people can understand the narration so that adjustments may be made before the final version.
- ✧ There are no specific penalties for being under 10 minutes in length. If the documentary is significantly shorter, however, the judges may determine that the project needed more knowledge and analysis.

Rules for All Categories

All History Fair projects must comply with these rules AND the specific rules for each category which follow.

- ✧ Topics must connect with Chicago or Illinois history in order to advance to the state contest. Non-Illinois topics are only permitted at the regional and finals competitions.
- ✧ Projects competing to advance to National History Day must connect to Chicago/Illinois history and use the NHD theme.
- ✧ Projects registered as “NHD eligible” will be assessed on how well their project integrates the NHD theme.
- ✧ Students may enter only one project each year. Sharing research in multiple projects is not permitted. Revising or reusing an entry from a previous year—whether one’s own or another student’s—will result in disqualification.
- ✧ Entries submitted for competition must be original and have been researched and developed in the current contest year.
- ✧ Students are responsible for the research, design, and production of their own project, as well as operating their own equipment and materials, including any narration. Students may receive advice from adults on the mechanical aspects of creating an entry and/or reasonable help necessary for safety, but the work must be completed by students. Materials created by others for use in the entry violate this rule.
- ✧ Each project is required to have a Summary Statement and Annotated Bibliography. *[See “Required Materials” for more details.]*
- ✧ Word counts must be provided for exhibits, websites, and papers. Time lengths must be provided for documentaries and performances.
- ✧ Plagiarism is unacceptable, and constitutes grounds for disqualification. *[See www.plagiarism.org for further guidance.]*
- ✧ Items potentially dangerous in any way—such as weapons, firearms, animals, etc.—are strictly prohibited.
- ✧ Do not place school name on projects, nor give in interviews.
- ✧ Interviews: Students should not prepare a formal, verbal presentation; however, they should plan to respond to questions posed by judges. The interviews are important to the History Fair experience, but the entry is judged on its merits alone. Website and paper interviews are optional.
- ✧ The Fair Use Doctrine allows students to use pre-existing materials (photos, footage, music, etc.) for educational purposes, including student productions like History Fair; therefore, students need not seek formal permissions within the context of the competition. However, if the project is shown in non-educational settings, then permissions should be sought as appropriate.

Rules for All Categories

- ✧ Teachers may have additional rules/restrictions for the History Fair at individual schools. Students should comply with all rules set by their teacher.
- ✧ Exhibits, performances, and documentaries will be judged and interviewed at the public competitions. Papers and websites are judged in a separate stream, which may have different deadlines for submission.

Required Materials

All projects must include an **Annotated Bibliography** and **Summary Statement**. Bibliographies must follow either the *Turabian* or *MLA* style format. Turabian is preferred. In the bibliography, each source should be *annotated* with a short description of how the student used that source.

The bibliography must be divided between *primary* sources (sources from the time period or written by someone with firsthand knowledge) and *secondary* sources (sources written after the time period, typically by a historian).

Students must acknowledge all sources used in the development of the project in the Annotated Bibliography in order to avoid plagiarism.

Include all sources that contributed useful information, perspectives, or visuals. Annotations may explain why students placed the source as primary/secondary if it is not immediately obvious; and, in the case of web sources, note its credibility. Bundle photos or other materials from the same collection into a single citation. Cite oral history transcripts, questionnaires, or other supplementary materials in the bibliography—do not provide copies of them.

The [Summary Statement](#) provides the project's thesis, a summary of the argument, and information about the development of the project. The form is available on the History Fair website.

Except for websites, where the Summary Statement and Annotated Bibliography should be printed on plain, white paper and stapled together and brought to the event with the project. The Annotated Bibliography and Summary Statement are not included in the word count.

CHICAGO METRO HISTORY FAIR
2015 SUMMARY STATEMENT

Attach an annotated bibliography (AB) that is divided between primary and secondary sources. Submit two copies of the SS and AB at the competition. Please type.

Student name(s) _____				
Title _____				
<input type="checkbox"/> Check if applicable (and respond to Question 3): <input type="checkbox"/> This project uses the 2015 National History Day theme, "Leadership & Legacy in [Chicago/Illinois] History"				
Project Category:				
<input type="checkbox"/> Exhibit	<input type="checkbox"/> Website	<input type="checkbox"/> Paper	<input type="checkbox"/> Documentary	<input type="checkbox"/> Performance
Student Composed Word Count:	Student Composed Word Count:	Student Composed Word Count:	Time:	Time:

1. THESIS STATEMENT
Present the project's argument or interpretation in two sentences. If you are using the NHD theme, you might want to make it evident in your thesis statement.

2. SUMMARY OF PROJECT
Briefly explain your project and its conclusion. Include: How and why did change happen and what was the impact? Why is it historically significant? What historical meaning or importance can we learn from your findings?