

John W. North High School
Honors World History & Geography
Summer Assignment/Reading

Every student enrolled in Honors World History and Geography will be required to participate in National History Day. History Day is an exciting way for students to study and learn about historical issues. In addition to acquiring useful historical knowledge and perspectives while developing entries, students develop critical thinking and problem solving skills that will help them manage and use information now and in the future.

Students are encouraged to choose any topic in local, national or world history and investigate its historical significance and relationship to the theme by conducting extensive primary and secondary research. After analyzing and interpreting their information, students will present their findings in papers, exhibits, performances, documentaries, and websites.

Your summer assignment (due on the first day of school) is as follows:

- Select a topic for your History Day Project that relates to the theme. **The 2026-27 theme is "Innovation in History: Impact, Influence, Change"**
- Please check www.nhd.org. Click on Create a History Day Project, this will walk you through how to begin.

- Collect a minimum of 10 sources for your topic; **five primary** sources and **five secondary** sources (see definitions below).
- Create an **annotated** bibliography for your sources (see sample on nhd.org).
- Write a 1-2 page summary of your topic, which includes a **brief history** of your topic, why you chose it, and how it ties to the theme. **This must be typed, double-spaced, 1" margins, and 12 pt. Font.**

The best informational/support sites available to assist you can be found at www.nhd.org/ and www.rcoe.k12.ca.us/historyday. Please visit these websites and spend some time familiarizing yourselves with the resources available.

You are encouraged to contact Mr. Zyber or Mr. Gonzalez at 951-788-7311 for any additional information. You can also contact us via email: szyber@riversideunified.org or marcgonzalez@riversideunified.org.

What is a primary source? Primary sources are materials directly related to a topic by time or participation. These materials include letters, speeches, and 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.

What is a secondary source? Secondary sources may take a variety of forms. The authors of secondary sources develop their interpretations and narratives of events based on primary sources, that is, documents and other evidence created by participants or eyewitnesses. Frequently, they also take advantage of the work of other historians by using other secondary sources. For example, the author of the history textbook which you use in school probably did not use too many primary sources.

Please visit www.nhd.org for more detailed descriptions and examples.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

How do I learn more about the theme?

Detailed information about the theme for the 2026-2027 National History Day contest will be posted on www.nhd.org by around mid-June. When you visit the website, click on “Contest” and then “essential information” or “Themes.”

How do I select a topic?

A list of sample topics will be provided by around mid-June. Go to www.nhd.org and click on “contest” and then “sample topics.”

Where do I start?

Start with a general reference, for example a textbook, encyclopedia, or monograph. A monograph is a book on a specific topic rather than a general reference. Those sources will often lead you to sources that are more specific. A great place to start is with **the Research Roadmap at www.nhd.org**. When you go to the website, just click “contest” then click “Research Roadmap” and you’re on your way!

When should I choose a category and start creating my project?

We will begin creating our projects in September after your topics have been approved and more thoroughly researched.

Do I have to enter the competition?

No, but we certainly encourage you to do so. You are going to put in a lot of hard work researching and creating your project. Entering the National History Day Competition is a nice way to earn some recognition that will give you something to genuinely ‘brag’ about on a college application.

Can we work in groups? If so, do we have to be in the same history class?

Yes, you can work in groups. In fact, you are encouraged to work with a small group (no more than four) to create your project. However, your summer assignment is to be done on an individual basis. No groups will be formed until after the initial research is completed. This is something to keep in mind as you are selecting your topics.

You do not have to be in the same history class in order to work in groups.

What is an annotated bibliography?

In short, it is a detailed list of the sources you will use to create your project. It includes the title, author, date of publication, and any other pertinent details that will help your reader find out exactly where you found your information. It also includes an annotation. An annotation normally should be about 1-3 sentences long. It must explain how the source was used and how it helped you understand your topic. You must first list your primary sources, and then list your secondary sources. Each list should be alphabetized.

FOR EXAMPLE:

Bates, Daisy. *The Long Shadow of Little Rock*. New York: David McKay Co. Inc., 1962.

Daisy Bates was the president of the Arkansas NAACP and the one who met and listened to the students each day. This first-hand account was very important to my paper because it made me more aware of the feelings of the people involved.

For more help, go to www.nhd.org, click on “contest,” then click, “essential information,” then click, “What is an annotated bibliography?” This will lead you to plenty of examples and links to help you create an annotated bibliography

Must I read all ten sources I’ve collected for my research project by the 1st day of school?

No. The intention is for you to gain a good idea of what your topic is essentially about, why it is significant, and how it is connected to the theme. You should have read enough of the sources to determine if it will be useful and how you might use it for your project. You’ll have more time during the first quarter at North to read more in depth.

When should I start my summer assignment? This is not an assignment that you can do at the last minute. Get started now so that you have time to ask questions and find plenty of good primary sources.