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Create a Record | Research | Competition FAQ | Register How do I count words for the 500-word limit in the exhibition category? Student-composed written material used at an exhibition (excluding the title page, process paper and annotated bibliography) may contain a maximum of 500 words. This limit does not apply to words that are contained in materials used for illustration, such as documents, artifacts, graphs, or timelines that were not created by the participant(s). It also does not apply to quotations from primary sources such as oral history interviews, letters or diaries. These materials are not student-composed. But if a student uses their own words in a timeline or on a chart, those words count. The 500 word limit applies to all student-composed written materials used in all media units (computers, slides, video) and/or any additional material. The following are examples of how student-composed words count with exhibitions: A date counts as a word, while each word in a name is counted individually. For example, January 1, 1990 counts as a word, but John Quincy Adams counts as three. Words like a, the and of count as one word each. Is the 500 word limit in an exhibition category separate from the 500-word limit for the process paper? Yes, the title page, process paper and bibliography are considered separate from the exhibition and do not count towards the 500-word limit for the exhibition itself. How do you count words for the paper category? The text of the historical paper (Title page, notes, annotated bibliography, illustration texts and additional material directly referenced in the text does not count) must not be less than 1,500 words and a maximum of 2,500 words in length. Every word or number in the text of the paper counts as a word. Unlike exhibitions, words in quotes count against the word limit in paper. Each part of a name counts as a word, so Mark Van Doren would count as 3 words. Each part of a date counts as a word, so June 13, 2002 would count as 3 words. Note that only words in the text of the paper count. Words in the title of the paper do not count, even if words in subtitles such as parts of the paper are counted, because they are part of the text. Words in notes, annotated bibliographies, illustration texts and attachments do not count against the limit, as they are not included in the text of the paper. Can you have pictures in a piece of paper, such as illustrations, graphs, etc.? Illustrations are also acceptable. Captions do not count in the word total. Make sure that illustrations are directly related to the text, and don't overdo them. The people who volunteer as paper judges tend to be quite text-based, and they are probably not going to be impressed by excessive illustrations; instead, they are likely to suspect that you may have a lot of confidence that your writing could stand up on its own. Can I use a fictional 1st person in a piece of paper or a performance? Yes. At the beginning of the rules of paper category in the National History Day Contest Guide, there is a description of paper: A paper is the traditional form of presenting historical research. Different types of creative writing (such as fictitious diaries, poems, etc.) are allowed, but must comply with all general and category rules. Your paper should be grammatically correct and well written. The rules say, A performance is a dramatic depiction of your subject's importance in history and must be original in the production. A performance is not just an oral report or a recitation of facts. You can make up characters to make a broader historical point, but not make up history. While beliefs must have dramatic appeal, this appeal should not be at the expense of historical accuracy. Therefore, it is clear that it is possible to have fictional characters, for example, write a fictitious diary. However, you need to make sure that you quote sources just as you would for a traditional paper or in a performances using primary sources as letters where appropriate. Most importantly, it must still be good story. You can make up the character, but the circumstances and events of the character's life and which that character witnesses or participates in should be based on historical facts. If you are writing a traditional essay, not a creative paper, it is best not to use a fictional character. The judges would find that quite jarring, and would likely think less of your essay for it. How many sources should I have for my annotated bibliography? We can not tell you a certain number of sources, because it will vary depending on the topic and by the resources that you have reasonable access to. For some subjects, such as the Civil War or many 20th-century American subjects, there are many sources available. For other topics, such as those in ancient history or non-U.S. history, there are likely to be far fewer sources available. The more good sources you have, the better, but don't pad your bibliography. Only list items that you actually use; if you looked at a source but it didn't help you at all, don't list it in your bibliography. You need to find both primary and secondary sources. Secondary sources help you put your subject into context, that is, to see how your subject relates to the whole and to understand its long-term causes and consequences. Primary sources help you develop your own interpretation and make your project lively and personal. As much as possible, your research should be balanced, given the views of all relevant groups. It means losers as well as winners, men and women, different nations, socio-economic/ ethnic/religious groups, etc. What balanced means will vary vary on your subject. How do I create a Process Paper for my project? A description of a maximum of 500 words explaining how you conducted your research and created and developed your contribution. You must finish your description with an explanation of the relationship between your topic to the contest theme. A title page is required as the first page of written material in each category. Your title page must only contain the title of your entry, your name(s) and the competition division and category where you are dept. Consists of four sections: The first section should explain how you selected your topic. The second section will explain how you conducted your research. The third section will explain how you selected your presentation category and created your project. The fourth section will explain how your project relates to the NHD theme. How do I quote sources for an annotated bibliography? Click this link for example: Quote sources for an Annotated Bibliography. How much and what kind of information should be included in the annotation? A note normally should be about 1-3 sentences long. You may be tempted to create page-long comments to impress the judges. Don't do it! Long notes are usually unnecessary and inappropriate, and most judges consider them an attempt to pad the bibliography. The Contest Guide says that notes need to explain how the source was used and how it helped you understand your subject. Make sure you explain it instead of making the mistake of telling us what the source said. In addition to explaining how you used a source or how it helped you, you sometimes need to include some additional information in an annotation. Here are some examples: Classification as primary or secondary source. You should use the annotation to explain why you categorized a particular source as primary or secondary, IF which is likely at all controversial. Historians sometimes disagree and there isn't always a right answer, so justify your choice to the judges. Secondary source that included primary sources. You may also use the note to explain that a book or other secondary source included several primary sources used for the paper. Example: This book included three letters between person X on the border and person Y back in New England, which provided insight into the struggles and experiences of the settlers. This book provided four images of settlers on the Great Plains and their homes, which were used at the exhibition. Fuller explanation of credits for documentaries. You are supposed to give credit in the documentary itself for images or other primary sources, but you can do this in a general way, for example by writing, Photos from: National Archives, Ohio Historical Society, A Photographic History of the Civil War rather than listing each photo individually in documentary credits, would take up too much of your allotted 10 minutes. You can then use the annotation for the collection or book (or whatever) in the bibliography to provide more detailed information. About us | How to | Resources | State Contest | Winners To Judge | Friends of hda | Sitemap Some common questions related to the competition. Don't you see your answers? Email us at info@nhd.org. Can I change the title or subject of my post? Students can change the title of their entry from one level of the contest to the next level. However, the subject of a project may not be changed once the project enters a competition (local, regional, or affiliate). 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You can make up the character, but the circumstances and events of the character's life and which that character witnesses or participates in should be based on historical facts. What is a primary source? Primary sources are material that directly relates to a subject 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 accounts about a person or event. Some materials may be considered primary sources for one substance but not for another. For example, a newspaper article about D-Day (which was June 6, 1944) written in June 1944 would be a primary source; an article on D-Day written in June 2001 probably wasn't written by an eyewitness or participant and wouldn't be a primary source. Similarly, Lincoln's Gettysburg address, delivered soon after the 1863 battle, is a primary source for the Civil War, but a speech given on the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg in 1963 is not a primary source for the Civil War. If there is any doubt as to whether a source should be listed as primary or secondary, you should explain in the annotation why you chose to categorize it as you did. Are interviews with experts primary sources? No, an interview with an expert (a professor of Civil War history, for example) is not a primary source, unless that expert actually experienced and has firsthand knowledge of the events described. If I find a quote from a historical person in my textbook or another secondary source and I use the quote in my project, should I list it as a primary source? No, quotations from historical figures found in secondary sources are not considered primary sources. The book's author has processed the quote, and selected it from the original source. Without seeing the original source for yourself, you don't know if the quote is taken out of context, what else was in the source, what the context was, etc. Should I list each photograph or document individually? You should handle this differently in notes than in the bibliography. When quoting sources for specific pieces of information or interpretation, such as footnotes or endnotes, you should quote the individual document or photograph. In the bibliography, however, you would only quote the collection as a whole, not all individual objects. You should include the entire title of the collection (e.g., Digges-Sewall Papers or Hutzler Collection), the institution and city or city/state where the collection is located (e.g. Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore). You can use the annotation to explain that this collection yielded 7 photographs that you used in your exhibition or that the collection provided14 letters that were important to help you track down what happened. The same treatment applies to newspaper articles. In the footnotes or endnotes, you should quote the individual articles and questions in a newspaper. In the bibliography, you would list only the newspaper itself, not the individual questions or articles; you can use the annotation to explain that you used X number of days of the magazine for your research. How many sources should I have for my annotated bibliography? We can not tell a certain number of sources, because it will vary depending on the topic and resources to which you have reasonable access. For some subjects, such as the Civil War or many 20th-century American subjects, there are many sources available. For other topics, such as those in ancient history or non-U.S. history, there are likely to be far fewer sources available. The more good sources you have, the better, but don't pad your bibliography. Only list items that you actually use; if you looked at a source but it didn't help you at all, don't list it in your bibliography. You need to find both primary and secondary sources. Secondary sources help you put your subject into context, that is, to see how your subject relates to the whole and to understand its long-term causes and consequences. Primary sources help you develop your own interpretation and make your project lively and personal. As much as possible, your research should be balanced, given the views of all relevant groups. This means different perspectives, different genders, different nations, different socio-economic/ethnic/religious groups, etc. What balanced means will vary depending on your subject. Topic.