WELCOME TO THE
NHD in WI TEACHER GUIDEBOOK

This guide is to help you with all things National History Day in Wisconsin (NHD in WI) related! Our goal is to make this a handy teacher tool for teachers to reference all aspects of an NHD project. From topic selection to process papers, find fast information and tips to advise your students during their project creation.

NHD in WI helps you meet and exceed the Wisconsin State Standards, most notably the Inquiry Strand. By completing an NHD project, students are examining primary and secondary sources, crafting an argument, and sharing their research (which counts as civic engagement!) The best part is the creative outlet students have by picking their own topic and creating one of five different project types.

QUESTIONS?
Contact NHD in WI at 608 – 264 – 6487 or email:
historyday@wisconsinhistory.org

PROJECT LOGISTICS

Method

NHD is successfully implemented in multiple ways! It can be a(n):
➢ Classroom-based project that meets WI State Standards.
➢ After-school activity or club targeting history-loving students.
➢ Extra credit opportunity for students who want more of a challenge.

Strategy

NHD creates opportunities for skill-building activities as well as collaboration. With the variety of project options (exhibit, documentary, paper, website, performance) teachers find collaborating with other departments to be helpful. It creates connections and more investment by students. Some common partnerships include your:
➢ Library/media specialists for research and project development.
➢ Language arts teachers for tight writing, thesis crafting and citations.
➢ Art or technology teachers to aid in project building.

Planning

Depending on how you implement NHD in WI, your benchmarks will change. Below is a general timeline to aid your scheduling, but you can customize your approach! **Competing is optional**.

Timeline

Time Frame:	6 weeks	10 weeks	15 weeks
Intro to NHD + Theme	1 week	1 week	1 week
Topic Exploration + Selection		1 week	2 weeks
Research	2 weeks	4 weeks	5 weeks
Thesis Creation	1 week	1 week	1 week
Project Organization + Outline	1 week	1 week	2 weeks
Project Creation	1 week	2 weeks	3 weeks

Suggestions from Idaho History Day

Work backwards. Figure out your benchmarks for grading and/or the regional contest and go from there.

Decide and divide. Think about what you want NHD to do for your students.
➢ *Do you want a competitive academic arena?* Compete! NHD competitions can be a great community and family showcase for students outside of sports.
➢ *Are you trying to find a way to meet all State Standards?* Follow a basic template and let the students decide how to share their information. Make it part of a grade, present to the class, host a parent showcase, or make a regional competition optional!
➢ *Do you want to provide a more creative outlet?* Allow varying group size and limitless project options! Have students really dive deep and explore this project.

Don't forget about:
1. Entry types (websites + papers are due early!)
2. Snow days impact workdays for students, but not NHD deadlines.
3. School assemblies, field trips, teacher conferences, etc.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF BEFORE YOU START

Grading
- o Which classes/students will do NHD?
- o Will this be optional or required?
- o What percentage of their grade will this be?
- o Will this be completed mostly in class, outside of class, or split?
- o Will you be checking in weekly, have major deadlines, or a combination?

Project Options
- o Can students work in groups? (no more than 5 students per group for competition)
  - ➢ If yes, are you going to allow groups with members from different classes?
- o Can students select any of the 5 project categories?
  - ➢ If not, which ones?
- o Will student topic choice be limited in any way? Such as time period or region? (There are no limits in the competition cycle; anything that goes with the theme is fair game!)

Work-in-Progress
- o Does your library have resources you can use?
- o Do you need to reserve library time or library instruction on how to research?
- o Are there local public libraries or college/university libraries students can use?
  - ➢ Which ones and are you thinking about planning a visit?
  - ➢ Outside of class or field trip?
- o Are there other departments you can collaborate with? English, Technology, Art?
- o Do you plan on sending a letter home to parents?
- o When do the projects have to be completed and when do you have to input grades?

Competition Prep
- o Will competing be optional or required?
  - ➢ If yes, how will transportation look? On your own or bus?
  - ➢ If yes, when and where is your regional contest? (Find out online under "contest")
  - ➢ Will competing count as extra credit?
- o Do you plan on hosting a school/local showcase or fair for student projects?

CONTEST COMPONENT

Looking to hit the "civic engagement" standard?
Host a fair for the community! These events range from small exhibitions within individual schools to district-wide events. The goals are the same regardless of how it is done.
- ✓ Provide recognition for *all* participating students.
- ✓ Bring the community into the classroom.
- ✓ Share history!

What does it mean to compete?
Competing means your student(s) is entering their project to be judged amongst other students in the area (at regionals) and across Wisconsin (at state). Community members, professional historians, and other history enthusiasts judge projects to decide which 2-3 projects advance to the next level of competition. **Learn more about the judging process on our website!**

TOPIC AND THEME

Advice

> **Avoid current events.** Encourage students to look for topics that took place at least 20 years ago to leave room for historical analysis. Topics within the past few decades are still "fresh" and the impact is still undefined.

> **Always lean towards interest.** Picking topics "because that's what will win" or "what the judges want to see" is not the path to success. Students will burn out if they are not passionate about their topic and it will show through in their project. Remind students everything has a history!

> **Spend time with the theme.** Truly! Coming up with your own examples will help you think through students' ideas. If a theme contains multiple elements students do not have to focus equally on both, but should highlight both within the project.

> **Be realistic.** Yes, we want students to explore their interests, but sometimes the research just isn't there. Thinking either bigger picture or smaller scale helps!

Picking a Topic

Too big! When students pick topics like WWII or Jazz, throw them a lifeline otherwise they will drown in information. Ask what about X interests them.

> An easy way to illustrate this is with a Google search
> - "Jazz" yields 243,000,000 results.
> - "Black and Tan Clubs" yields 8,300,000 results.
> - "Black and Tan Jazz Clubs in Wisconsin" yields 364,000 results.

Too small! Of course the invention of the Babcock Tester is cool, but does not make a good topic by itself. With super specific topics, ask leading questions such as "Why does that matter today?" "Who did Babcock make that for and why?"

> If students don't listen to you, challenge them to go out and find a certain number of primary and secondary sources.

> Chances are they will struggle to scrape together quality sources and think more broadly—or prove you wrong. Either way they found a topic!

Search the Friendly Finding Aid at friendlyfindingaid.com for primary sources and topics.

Biohazards

Biographies and book reports are common assignments. Students fall into this trap with NHD projects—which is why this is a cautionary subsection. Students may get caught up in the narrative of the person or event. **Example:**

> *Susan B. Anthony + Suffrage*: students frequently focus on her birth, death and other personal stories. Those are facts that don't help in understanding why she is noteworthy within the discussion of suffrage. If a student believes Anthony is important, encourage exploration about other activists from the movement and how they all fit together. Think about the bigger picture, what the thesis statement says, and the theme!

Historical Context

Nothing in the past happened in isolation, yet too often students forget this! Remind students to look before and after their main event. Not only is this crucial to shaping his/her understanding, but something judges will look for.

RESEARCHING AND THESIS

Where to Start

Start with background searches on Wikipedia, Encyclopedia articles, or general books. These will never be cited, but they are easy for students to access and allow them to pick out key words, people, events, and more to guide their research.

Research Tracking

Depending on how you are implementing NHD, decide how you want students to track sources. Will students be graded on number/type of sources? Is there a time frame or specific tracking system you want to use? **Some common misconceptions:**

➢ *Long bibliographies = winners.* Sources are not meant to be used as trophies that students try to rack up as many as possible, they are meant to *interpret* history. Quality over quantity. (But three sources mean students didn't dig enough.)

➢ *No one looks at bibliographies.* Bibs are to history as lab reports are to science. How else are historians supposed to show their work?

Where can I direct students?

✓ Wisconsin Historical Society Archives collection either online or in-person.
✓ Library of Congress for a variety of online resources; very user friendly.
✓ Chronicling America or other newspaper databases.
✓ Digital Public Library of America – fantastic online exhibit collections.
✓ Other historical societies from relevant states/locations.
✓ Think outside the box such as songs, objects, clothing and pictures.

Go to an ARC

There are 14 Area Research Centers (ARCs) across the state that house documents, manuscripts, and local government records. Most importantly, each center borrows collections between each other and from the Wisconsin Historical Society. If you can't make it to Madison, an ARC is your portal! (*Learn more about how to visit the Society on our website!*)

Locations: University of Wisconsin: Madison, Eau Claire, Green Bay, La Crosse, Milwaukee, Oshkosh, Parkside, Platteville, River Falls, Stevens Point, Stout, Superior, and Whitewater + the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center (Ashland)

Annotated Bibliography

All students should have one! The goal of citing sources is to allow someone else to find a source. Remember to use the Chicago citation style, but keep in mind those are guidelines (that seem to be constantly in flux). Students should follow as closely as possible to the most recent version, yet it is important to note that no student will be disqualified on the sole basis of a misplaced comma.

Bias

Primary sources do not equal fact! Students should ask "who wrote this and why?" before notetaking begins, check for bias. Whether or not there is bias does not discredit the source, but adds an extra layer of analysis—why would two sources disagree? What does this author have to gain by writing this? What is true? The best way to show bias is with political cartoons, we have an example on the website, check it out!

PROJECT CREATION AND FINAL TIPS

Inquiring

The process of reading and interpreting historical documents may be new to students now, but won't be after an NHD project! Rather than reading passively (for dates, people, places) encourage students to think of a new source as evidence. Like a detective with a suspect, interrogate the source! Pull out information in order to build a case by asking questions.

➢ The National Archives developed a series on primary source analysis, below is a start:
   1. Meet the document.
   2. Observe its parts.
   3. Try to make sense of it.
   4. Use it as historical evidence.
   o Go to: archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets to find out more.

Research to Thesis

Based on the evidence, students will start to form their own answers to initial research questions. **Examples:** (sample theme: Conflict and Compromise)

➢ *Research question:* Why was there a Korean War? What happened? Why is it important today? What can we learn?

➢ *Thesis*:* The Korean War was the first proxy war of the Cold War and resulted in the United States intervening in the conflict to support South Korea's military. Although the U.S. joined the war in an effort to eliminate the influence of communism, the compromise of the 1953 Armistice led to an inconclusive result, which causes conflicts today. *(*Actual NHD students thesis)*

Thesis Development

To build a thesis, remember these Top 5 Things:
1. *It's a roadmap.* What is going to be shown to the reader? Through the process, keep asking and answering: how does this connect to the thesis?
2. *Make an argument.* Take a side and try to convince someone to believe it.
3. *Answer: so what?* Why should the reader care about the topic? What was the impact or change? We all know Susan B. Anthony fought for women's suffrage, but why should we care, even today?
4. *Bring in the theme.* Readers should be able to pick out all parts of the theme, so be sure to include theme language! (ex: if the theme is "Leadership and Legacy," students should use at least one, if not both, words in his/her thesis statement.)
5. *Be patient.* A thesis takes time. There will be multiple drafts, so don't get discouraged. The more drafts, the closer he/she is to a fantastic thesis!

Final Tips

➢ Thesis location: be clear! The easier to spot the better, make sure it's front and center.

➢ Double check the rules if your students decide to compete.

➢ Have fun! This project is hard for teachers and students. However, you are giving your students an amazing opportunity to add their voices to a community of local, state, national, and international historians!