

Process Papers

Students producing entries in the exhibit, documentary, website and performance categories must write a “process paper.” This paper introduces your topic, explains how you developed your entry, and documents your research. It is important to do a good job on this part of your entry because it is the first thing that people look at when evaluating History Day entries. The process paper contains three parts: the title page, a research description, and the annotated bibliography.

The process paper must be typed on plain white paper and stapled in the top left corner. It should be assembled in the following order: title page, research description, and annotated bibliography. Do not enclose the process paper in a cover or binder.

Title Page

The title page includes the title of the entry, name(s) of the student(s) who developed the entry, and the age division and category of the entry and number of student composed words and number of words in the process paper. Do not include any additional information or illustrations on the title page. It is important to come up with a good title for your entry. A good title will quickly introduce your topic, and it will help the viewer understand your point of view. You should include ideas from the theme in your title.

For example, a title for an entry about Clara Ueland could be:

*The Legacy of Peaceful Protesting:
Through the Leadership of Martin Luther King Jr.*

This title explains the topic and also gives a sense of the argument that Martin Luther King Jr. used his leadership to help encourage peaceful protesting.

- Title is 1/3 way down the paper and is centered
- Everything is in Times New Roman, 12 point font
- Everything is single spaced
- At Bottom of Page (centered):
 - Name: First and Last (All members, alphabetically)
 - Junior Division
 - Individual or Group and Type (Exhibit, Performance, Documentary or Website)
 - Student-composed Words: _____ (Websites and Exhibits only)
 - Process Paper: _____ words (all projects)

Research Description

The research description is not a summary of the topic. It is an essay of **no more than 500 words** explaining how you selected the topic, conducted your research, and developed your entry. The research description should conclude with a paragraph describing how the topic fit this year's theme and why it is important in history.

The research description should include the following four sections: (1) explain how you chose your topic, (2) explain how you conducted your research, (3) explain how you selected your presentation category and created your project, and (4) explain the historical impact of your topic and how your project relates to the History Day theme.

Paragraph 1:

Introduce your topic in the first paragraph and explain the process for choosing it. Did you begin by researching a broader topic and then narrow to your current topic? What sparked your interest in the topic? Did you have a friend, family member, or teacher help you decide? Maybe you saw a television program on your topic? Did you learn about it in a current or previous history class?

Paragraph 2:

Explain how you conducted your research in the second paragraph. What process did you use? Where did you go to find your sources? Did you visit a major library? Did you conduct any interviews? What sources were most useful? What problems did you encounter in your quest to find sources?

Paragraph 3:

This paragraph explains how you selected your presentation category and the steps you took to create your project. Why did you choose the category that you did? How did you actually create your project and what materials did you use? Was there significant meaning behind any of the materials used (i.e. selection of a particular prop, choosing the color scheme for your exhibit, incorporating music from the era in your documentary)? What was the most enjoyable or frustrating part of creating your project?

Paragraph 4:

In your final paragraph you should explain your thesis and how your project relates to the History Day theme for the year. Try to tie in connections to the words of the theme. You should also discuss the historical impact of your topic in this final paragraph.

Process Paper Examples

For examples of process papers, go to the following website link:

<http://nationalhistoryday.org/ProcessPapers.htm>