



What is National History Day?



www.history.idaho.gov



National History Day in Idaho (NHD) is an exciting way to engage students in history. Students choose historical topics related to a theme and conduct extensive primary and secondary research through libraries, archives, museums, and historic sites. After analyzing and interpreting their sources and drawing conclusions about their topics' significance in history, students present their work in original papers, exhibits, performances, websites, and documentaries. These products are entered into competitions in the spring at regional, state, and national levels where they are evaluated by professional historians and educators. Each April students from across Idaho compete in the state finals. The program culminates in the Kenneth E. Behring National Contest held each June at the University of Maryland at College Park.



Educators can apply the program in many ways including as part of the classroom curriculum, as a pull-out program for advanced students, or as an after-school program. The NHD program also helps students fulfill the senior project requirement and meets many State of Idaho Education Standards.

“I have worked with regional students and teachers for over 15 years. Over the years, college students have told me that doing a NHD project in junior and/or senior high was the single most important experience that prepared them for college.”

Barbara Hayes, Central Idaho Regional Coordinator

How does National History Day fit into your curriculum?

In today's educational climate, with so much pressure from outside the classroom, many teachers are hesitant of fitting additional programs into their curriculum. National History Day is a program that can be integrated into any social studies or history classroom, as it helps teachers expand and enrich the existing curriculum. Educators who teach research skills, engage students in higher-order thinking skills, and ask students to submit a project for assessment find NHD to be the perfect tool. NHD uses an [annual theme](#) to guide student research. This also gives a focus for teaching research and historical content in the classroom. Many teachers incorporate the theme into their everyday teaching, asking students to look for a relationship to the theme in each classroom lesson.

Benefits for Teachers

- Program focus on developing research skills meets many State of Idaho Education Standards in Social Studies and Language Arts
- NHD is an excellent tool for fulfilling the senior project graduation requirement
- Provides a framework for hands-on, student-centered learning
- [New research](#) shows that students who participate in National History Day perform at higher levels of scholastic achievement and are better prepared for college, career, and civic participation

Benefits for Students

- Develops core research skills by using primary and secondary sources, placing their topic in historical context, and conducting analysis and interpretation
- Students are better readers, critical thinkers, and problem solvers
- Opportunity to practice writing and public speaking skills by presenting their research to teachers, students, and historians
- Students cultivate an interest in history by researching a topic of their choice
- Students with different learning styles can choose a project type (performance, exhibit, documentary, etc.) that matches their abilities and interests





“My students have participated in the National History Day program through their Gifted and Talented class for 11 years now. I love that the NHD program gives them an opportunity to take their work beyond the classroom and allows them plenty of choices in topic and type of project, while still holding a very high academic standard. NHD allows students to find excitement and challenge in historical research.”

Elyse Thorpe, Meridian School District

It is easy to **implement** a National History Day Program at your school:

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| Step One: | Introduce History Day
Introduce key learning themes and goals and familiarize students with program rules and guidelines. |
| Step Two: | Choosing Topics
Topics must relate to the annual theme and demonstrate a larger historical impact. |
| Step Three: | Choosing Projects
Students choose to present their work in original papers, exhibits, performances, websites, or documentaries. |
| Step Four: | Research and Analysis
Review and practice using primary and secondary sources. |
| Step Five: | Creating Projects
After completing their research, identifying their theme statement and supporting evidence, students prepare a 500 word process paper summarizing their experience with the project. |
| Step Six: | Competition
Students may choose to enter their project in a regional History Day competition and have the opportunity to progress to the state and national levels. Student and teacher scholarship and prize information is available on the Idaho State Historical Society website. |
| Step Seven: | Evaluation
Evaluations help lay the groundwork for future success. |

“A student must complete a senior project by the end of grade twelve. The project must include a written report and an oral presentation. Additional requirements for a senior project are at the discretion of the local school district or LEA. If approved by your local school district or LEA, History Day may be an option students can use to satisfy their Senior Project requirement.”

Peter Kavouras, Idaho State Department Education



“Over the years of both incorporating NHD into my classroom curriculum, and later as regional and state coordinator for the NHD in Idaho, I have witnessed the phenomenal academic growth of students who become involved in historical research. I have often had students and parents tell me that completing a NHD project was the very best thing they did in school and helped them with every class they had in college.”

Karen Grindle, Retired Educator and NHD Coordinator



“National History Day is a great fit for senior projects. This tested and proven program incorporates a written and oral report; the requirements for all senior projects. NHD allows students to follow their own interests and improves written, oral, and presentation skills. College preparedness is enhanced while students acquire an enthusiasm for history.”

Kurt Zwolfer, Education Specialist, Idaho State Historical Society



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