



Sample National History Day Timeline and Benchmarks

Below you will find a sample National History Day timeline, including important benchmarks and skill building activities in the process. This is only a suggestion for a way to work with NHD in your class. Many NHD classrooms in the state have successfully worked with the program on shorter or longer timeframes.

September/ October	Introduce NHD Project and Theme Define Classroom Expectations and Deadlines <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss project deadlines and grade expectations. Discuss group options and merits of group/individual projects. Set any topic, category, or group size limitations for your class. Send parent letter about program, deadlines, competitions, and parent roles.
October	Topic Selection <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brainstorm potential topics and discuss good and bad topics for the theme. Work through several examples as a class. Share the topic selection funnel.• Students select their general topics. Encourage students to go brainstorm beyond just first ideas. Research Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduce the concepts of primary and secondary sources. Share samples related to relevant course content. Discuss various research resources and methods (online, library, archives, etc.).• Students develop research questions for their project. Organizational Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share potential research organization methods. Discuss citation formats, bibliographies, and footnotes.• Have students identify an organizational system for their NHD project. Background Reading/Secondary Sources <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss ideas of historical context.• Begin research with secondary sources.
November	Narrow Topic <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss the process and importance of a narrow topic, especially given size limits of NHD projects.• Students narrow their topics. Analysis and Argument <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss document analysis and interpretation of primary sources. Work with sample documents related to course content. Discuss the use of primary and secondary sources to build an argument.• Students begin to develop thesis and define theme connection. Select a Presentation Category <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share characteristics of good projects in each category. Discuss suitability of topic to category and benefits/drawbacks of each category.• Students select presentation category. Advanced Research <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students investigate primary sources and scholarly secondary sources.



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Early December	Analysis and Argument <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students more fully outline argument. Draft Project <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with general ideas of outlining and supporting arguments with evidence. Discuss the use of verbal, written, and visual communication ideas.• Students draft or outline their project. Project Construction <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students begin project construction. Fill Research Holes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students continue to research to fill in any holes in support of argument or project.
Late December	Complete Projects <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete project itself and associated paperwork (including bibliography and process paper). Project Feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students seek feedback from peers and teachers.
January/ February	School Contest <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete project, submit materials by deadline, and attend event.
February/ March	Regional Contest <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve project for regional event, submit materials by deadline, and attend event.
April-June	State Contest <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve project for state event, submit materials by deadline, and attend event. National Contest <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve project for national event, submit materials by deadline, and attend event.
<i>Be aware of the registration deadline for your assigned regional contest and plan your timetable accordingly. Registration materials, papers, and web site entries will need to be submitted by the registration deadline, which may be up to three weeks before the contest date.</i>	