Introduction to National History Day
Creating Student Historians

NHD
NATIONAL HISTORY DAY
Building a History Day Project

The Steps to a Successful Project
Step 1: Topic Brainstorm

What topics can you think of related to Taking a Stand?

- Politics/Government
- Military History
- Science/Technology
- Social Movements
- Arts, Literature, or Music
- What else?
Topic Brainstorm

What topics are some examples of Taking A Stand?

Nelson Mandela’s Stand for Equality in South Africa

William Jennings Bryan: Standing Against Evolution

Rosa Parks: Sitting Down to Take a Stand

Galileo’s Stand Against the Church
Tips for Picking Topics

• **Is your topic too new?**
  - Avoid current events… Delve into a part of history!
  - More than 20-25 years in the past as a rule of thumb

• **Is your topic too broad?**
  - Narrow topic by time period, people, event, or geographic area
  - Look at something specific related to the broad topic

Rosa Parks: Exploring a New Form of Non-Violent Protest

The Civil Rights Movement
Tips for Picking Topics

• Other questions to consider:
  o Available resources:
    Are there primary and secondary sources that you can access about this topic?
  o Do you like the topic? NHD is a long-term project. Pick a topic that interests you!
  o If you are unsure about a topic, ask Dr. Snyder!!!
    o snydee@chowan.edu
The NHD Process

Research

Analyze

Present

The Three Hats of the Historian
Step 2: Research!

- Once you pick a topic, you need to find information.
- Where do you look?
- What can you find?
- How do you find it?
Imagine: You are the Topic!

It is 2060, and a historian is going to write a biography about your life. Write down anything the historian could use to find information about you! What sources could the historian use?

- Yearbooks
- Newspaper articles
- Birth Certificate
- Interviews
- Report Cards
- Diary
- Journal
- Photographs
- Videos
- Sound recordings
- Letters/e-mails
Research: The Internet

• The Internet: A Double-Edged Sword
• Positives: Many Primary Source Databases
  – Fantastic, Accessible Resources for NHD Projects
• Negatives: Non-Scholarly Websites
• The Real Danger: Wikipedia!
  – The Curious Case of Czech Strongman Eric Roubinek
Imagine: You are the Historian!

Imagine you're researching Rosa Parks.
What sources of information might you find about her?

- Letters
- Books
- Web pages
- Diary
- Newspaper Articles
- Magazine

- Photographs
- Biographies
- Auto-biography
- TV documentary
- Oral histories
- Journal

All these sources fall into two big categories of information: primary or secondary sources.
Primary Sources
Created during the time period/event you are studying or by people who lived through the time period/event you are studying. (Examples include letters, newspaper articles, photos, artifacts, interviews with people who lived through the time period, autobiographies, etc.)

Secondary Sources
Created after the fact and analyze primary sources to create a historical narrative. Can provide critical background information.
How Do I Recognize a Good Source?

• Direct Students to Books and Articles
  – Judges Value These Sources More
  – Help Students to Understand the Value of Scholarly Review
  – Better Preparation for College Study

• Primary Sources Are Important!
  – Document Readers Are often Great Starting Points

• Need Help? Ask Dr. Snyder!!!
Research Questions

After you identify the sources, what next?

Ask students to think of research questions to guide their research and further define their topic.

Sample Question
• What was the impact of Rosa Park’s refusal to give up her seat for a white person?
Research Tips

• Explore topics of interest that relate to the theme.

• **Start with secondary sources** on several topics that may interest you. (Secondary sources may include textbooks, books by historians, encyclopedia, recent newspaper or magazine articles, or a website from a reliable source).

• **Move on to primary sources** (diaries, newspaper articles from the time, oral histories, government records, historic objects, photographs, sound recordings, videos, music of the time period, etc.)
Research Tips

• You can often find ideas for primary sources by looking at the bibliographies of your secondary sources.

• There are many document readers and primary source data bases – take advantage of them!

• You need both types of research for a good NHD project.
Where can you find information?

• Visit a **library**: School, public, university or college
• Look in an **archives** (online or in real life)
• Conduct an **interview** with an expert or participant
• Look on the **Internet** (and evaluate each source you find). Good websites include www.loc.gov, www.archives.gov, http://docsouth.unc.edu, etc. Your teacher and librarian can help you with this.
• Visit a **historical society** or **museum**.
What do you do with all this information?

• Read it
• Analyze and think about it
• Make an argument (your thesis)
**Votes for Women Broadside**

Published by the WOMEN'S POLITICAL UNION

**When Events Demand**

Number 2
Price 2 Cents

"STAND BACK, LADIES!"

**CONVICTS OUT-RANK WOMEN.**

There has been a general belief, which we
feel has been unjustly spread, that
women are inferior to men, and this is
not so. The man who
has lost his right to vote through being con-
VICTED of a crime, can, when freed from prison,
be given the object of executive clemency and
be restored to his civil rights.

By a stroke of the pen Gov. White gave to
his people an opportunity to vote. Women are
out-ridden by criminals in the
code of New York.

When these unfortunate women chose to
vote, the Secretary of State in his office
and the men in the State, who had
been elected, were prepared to do nothing
for them. The men who had been
convicted, were restored to their rights, and
women were not.

With confidence we challenge every
one of the women to vote, and to see
why the less men who are elected
as women should be made the politicians
of the victims of their sex.
Analysis

_Become_ the historian. History Day is more than just a book report or a chronology.

- **Evaluate** your sources
- **Strong analysis** relates evidence to the larger questions.
- **Develop a thesis statement** about your topic and provide evidence to support your thesis.
What is a thesis statement?

A Thesis Statement explains what you will argue and how you will do it.

- Answers your research questions.
- States your main idea—the argument you are trying to prove.
- Relates your idea to the theme.
- Demonstrates the idea’s importance in history.
- Includes such elements as who, what, where, when, how, and especially why.