



What is National History Day?

National History Day in Idaho (NHD) is an exciting way to engage students in history. Students in grades 4-12 choose historical topics related to an annual theme and conduct extensive primary and secondary research through libraries, archives, museums, online resources and historic sites. After analyzing and interpreting their sources and drawing conclusions about their topic's significance in history, the students become writers, filmmakers, web designers, playwrights and artists as they create unique contemporary expressions of history. Their experience culminates in a series of contests at the regional and state levels, and an annual national competition in the nation's capital in June.

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. NHD in Idaho also helps students fulfill the senior project requirement and meets many State of Idaho Content Standards.

"My students have participated in the National History Day program through their Gifted and Talented class for 17 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, Victory Middle School

How does National History Day fit into your curriculum?

In today's demanding educational climate, many teachers are hesitant of fitting additional programs into their curriculum. But the NHD program provides everything teachers need to bring students on an unforgettable learning adventure that integrates with – and enhances – standards-based curriculum. With sample topics, a guide to conducting historical research in the classroom, lesson plans and more, the flexible NHD program teaches, prepares and inspires.

"National History Day is a fantastic program for college and career readiness. NHD encourages students to pursue their interests and develop quality presentations, such as documentaries, skits, and artfully crafted presentation boards. It fosters skills in inquiry, research, writing, and public presentation. It increases students' confidence and at the same time, they experience how history is relevant to their life and the world around them."

- Heidi Wiesner, Education Specialist, Idaho State Historical Society



Benefits for Teachers

- Program focus on developing research skills meets many State of Idaho Content Standards in Social Studies, History and Language Arts
- NHD in Idaho is an excellent option for fulfilling the senior project graduation requirement
- Provides a framework for project-based, student-centered learning
- Research shows that NHD students perform at high levels of scholastic achievement and are better prepared for college, career and civic participation. The full research report can be viewed online at www.nhd.org/NHDWorks.

Benefit for Students

- NHD program develops core research skills by using primary and secondary courses, placing their topic in historical context, and conducting analysis and interpretation.
- NHD students learn 21st century College and career-ready skills such as collaborating with team members, talking to experts, managing their time and persevering.
- NHD program cultivates an increased interest in history by having the students select their topics and in which format to present their projects.

“National History Day is exceptional for teaching my kids, not only their particular chosen subject, but the valued experience of RESEARCH. I have noticed my students have a greater appreciation for searching for viable information within credible sources, instead of random, haphazard pursuits of varying facts. In the age of the internet, much out there is not worthwhile and, often times, inaccurate. For my students to learn to dig deeper for primary sources and supported, qualified, researched documents is priceless. And all this is conducted within the NHD creative outlet instead of simple traditional research and presentations or papers.”

- Dave Johnson, North Idaho Stem Charter Academy

Here's how to implement the National History Day Program in your classroom:

Step One: Introduce History Day Introduce key learning themes and goals and familiarize students with program rules and guidelines.

Step Two: Choosing 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 contest and have the opportunity to progress to the state and national level contests. Student and teacher scholarship and prize information is available on the Idaho State Historical Society website at history.idaho.gov/national-history-day-in-idaho.

Step Seven: Evaluation Written evaluations and feedback from volunteer judges 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*

“Every year I look forward to having my students participate in NHD. I see a growth in them that no other program can bring. The students gain an interest in the study of history by having an opportunity to choose a topic and study it in depth. By researching and creating a project they learn more and get more out of the topic. With all there is to cover in the study of history each year, there is rarely time to study a topic deeply. I work with 8th graders who have told me later after entering high school that their participation in NHD gave them a jump start to success in high school and beyond.”

- *Rona Johnson, Rocky Mountain Middle School*

“Our school utilized the National History Day project as a precursor for the larger and more intensive required Senior Project.

I feel this was not only a valuable asset for the students to help them plan and prepare for that next step in their academic journey, but it was a great asset and tool in awakening a pride and love of learning History that many of them hadn't experienced before! While many of my students moaned and groaned when they were first introduced to the project, by the end of the year, many of them were sharing stories with me of how much new information and valuable learning experiences they gained from the project, and how thankful they really were for having gone through it.”

- *Stacey Moylan, Caldwell High School*



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STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

SHERRI YBARRA, ED.S.
SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

650 W. STATE STREET, 2ND FLOOR
BOISE, IDAHO 83702
(208) 332-6800 OFFICE
WWW.SDE.IDAHO.GOV