

PERFORMANCES

The performance category can be one of the most exciting ways to participate in History Day, since it is the only category in which students present their research live. Entries in this category must have dramatic appeal, but not at the expense of historical information. Creativity is the key here, and students must make effective use of their ten-minute time allowance.

Teaching skills and content through History Day performances

Exemplary History Day historical performances will reflect *historical content and interpretation* as well as a *creative process*. Students need to balance the following key elements of every good performance:

- 1. Information.** The goal of a History Day performance is to present the substance of research on a topic.
- 2. Dramatization.** The goal of a History Day performance is to engage the audience in a dramatic portrayal.

As in all other History Day categories, performances contain these basic elements:

- 1. Thesis statement.** Introduces audience to the main ideas of a presentation.
- 2. Explanation.** Use body of the performance to explain the main ideas.
- 3. Conclusion.** Summarize ideas at the end of the performance

Here are some suggestions for students who are preparing performances:

Research and analysis in the performance category

- As students conduct their research, they should write important facts or quotes that might be important to the performance later on.
- Continue to remind students that historical content should be the emphasis. Before students get very involved in scripting and staging, they should write a thesis statement, supporting statements, and a conclusion. Then they should think about how their historical interpretation can become part of a historical performance.

Preparing scripts

- When students write the scripts, they need to focus on major ideas, and a major thesis.
- The script should contain references to the historical evidence students have found in their research. Using actual dialogue, quotations, or excerpts from speeches are good ways of putting historical detail into the performance. Remember the power of direct quotes.
- Revision is as important for dramatic performances as in any other category. Revisions should focus not only on improving dramatic elements, but also on clarifying major historical ideas, connections between the topic and the theme, and links between the topic and the time period.

See the National History Day website for additional tips on helping students establish effective characters and stage their performances. Also, consider working with the theater and music experts in your school.

Teacher materials for Section II, Performances

- Performance Checklist
- Performance Calendar

CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Giddings., Paula, *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America* (New York: Bantam, 1984), 119.
- Turabian, Kate L., *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

PERFORMANCE CHECKLIST

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

- Improve title to better stress the theme
- Make your thesis more evident in your performance
- Place more emphasis on:
 - Chronology of event
 - History Day theme
 - Impact of your topic
- Other
- Your content should be more specifically focused on _____
- Give more specific examples to illustrate your points
- Get rid of irrelevant information that does not relate to thesis
- Include more analysis
- Emphasize the "big ideas" about the topic
- Give more specific details (names, dates)
- Your performance needs to be better organized
- Improve introduction to topic at beginning of your performance
- Improve conclusion
- Develop a stronger thesis
- Improve performance aspect by:
 - Speak more clearly
 - Speak more slowly
 - Try to create the "mood" of your topic better
 - Include direct quotes in your project

WORK HABITS

- Needs to demonstrate better organization
- Did not meet all checkpoint deadlines
- Did not sufficiently accept feedback
- Did not seek out feedback from others on the project
- Did not do sufficient revisions of project
- Needs to demonstrate more effective group work skills (groups only)

RESEARCH

- Increase number of primary sources used
- Increase number of secondary sources used
- Connect your topic to the issues of the time period

(continued on next page)

PERFORMANCE CHECKLIST (cont.)

QUALITY OF WRITTEN WORK

- ___ Type in readable font and font size
- ___ Make written work neat and free of errors
- ___ Written work was not stapled in correct order

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ___ Make sure you know the definition of a primary source
- ___ Write entries in correct form
- ___ Correct indentation problems
- ___ Include annotations for each entry
- ___ Lengthen annotations (minimum 3 sentences each)
- ___ Entries must be alphabetized

TITLE PAGE

- ___ Type in correct format
- ___ Correct spelling/grammar errors
- ___ Title page must be neat and clean

MOCK INTERVIEW

- ___ Improve posture
- ___ Improve voice projection
- ___ Show more eye contact with audience
- ___ Convey more confidence when speaking
- ___ Answer questions more confidently

MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Researched at a very high level | <input type="checkbox"/> Finished paper is well written |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gave an effective oral presentation | <input type="checkbox"/> Truly incorporated the theme into the paper |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Completed high-level written work | <input type="checkbox"/> Worked with partner(s) cooperatively |