

**NEW YORK CITY
HISTORY DAY
2026**

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CENTER
FOR
BROOKLYN
HISTORY



REVOLUTION, REACTION, REFORM IN HISTORY

**NEW YORK CITY HISTORY DAY
EDUCATOR WORKBOOK**

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DEAR EDUCATORS,

You make History Day happen. We know the work of encouraging and guiding students through the process of researching, writing, and shaping a final project can be hard. Through this workbook, we've aimed to provide strategies and lesson plans for guiding students through the research process. This book alone isn't enough for a student to create a successful history day project, but there are even more resources available online. Our job at the Center for Brooklyn History is to support you. If there is something else that would be helpful, please let us know!

ABOUT HISTORY DAY

Since 1974, History Day has been a National Contest providing students a platform to present original historical research projects. Each year, History Day reaches over half a million students worldwide. New York City History Day is the regional contest feeding into New York State and National History Day. Brooklyn Public Library's Center for Brooklyn History has hosted the contest since 2021. History Day projects are crafted by middle school and high school students in groups or individually. They must compete in one of five categories: Documentary, Exhibit, Paper, Performance, or Website. Students can choose a topic related to any time or place in history so long as it connects to the annual national theme. The theme for the 2026 contest is "Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History."

WHAT IS A HISTORY DAY PROJECT

National History Day asks students to create projects based on original

historical research focused on a topic aligned with a shared common theme. A History Day project goes further than just research. Students examine their sources with a critical eye and analyze them to support an argument. Listing the information does not create an independent viewpoint; rather, History Day asks students to consider their historical period and discuss the impact it had on the world or community where it took place. History Day projects should include historical interpretation and analysis. Students should have research questions and a thesis statement. To show the value and significance of their research, students must answer the questions: What caused this event to occur? What was the lasting impact? A successful History Day project explores a time and place with an eye toward the present.

History Day students utilize the media of their chosen category. How can they best present their research and ideas through the confines of a documentary, exhibit, paper, performance, or website? Projects must be thorough in their research but succinct in their presentation.

WHY PARTICIPATE IN HISTORY DAY

History Day prepares students for college learning and beyond. Through inquiry-based learning, History Day asks students to develop critical thinking and understand bias. Students learn research skills that will serve them no matter where they go in their life. They learn to analyze primary and secondary sources, develop an argument, and support the argument with evidence. They look for multiple

perspectives and come to understand the complexity of any given circumstance and the lasting impact it can have. History Day also supports students reading and communication skills while giving them agency and personal responsibility over their own education and experience.

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Wisconsin Historical Society, and the Colorado Department of Education compiled a list of Common Core State Standards (used by the New York City and New York State departments of Education) connections to History Day:

bklynlib.org/NHD-common-core

MODELS OF PARTICIPATION

There is no one way for students to participate in NYCHD. Review the options below and figure out which model works best for you, your students, and your school.

It's important for teachers to note New York City History Day allows schools to submit up to two projects per category. For example, a school can submit two (2) individual documentaries AND two (2) group documentaries. However, a school CANNOT submit three (3) individual documentaries. If many students from your school would like to participate in History Day, we recommend having a school contest prior to the NYC regional contest. See page 64 or ideas on running your own contest. If you have any questions on running your own History Day contest, feel free to reach out to the New York City Coordinator at nychd@bklynlibrary.org

Class Assignment: History Day is assigned as a semester long project for your classroom. Projects will count toward the students' overall grade. With the classroom model teachers can choose if students can select any topic of their choice or find a topic within a larger curricular theme (i.e.: if your class usually studies the American Revolution in the first half of the year, you can have all students choose an area of study within that topic.) With this model you will likely need to have a school contest before submitting projects to New York City History Day.

Extra Credit: Students create a History Day project for extra credit toward their social studies or history grade. They would work on the project independently with the teacher available for advisement.

Extracurricular or Elective: History Day participation is offered as part of a "History Club" or elective class. This may allow students to work inter-grade level and focus on interests outside of the required classroom history lessons. The goals of the course or club would be to help students complete their History Day project. Depending on your school's policies, this could be offered for course credit.

History Day projects can also be made in collaboration with other subjects outside of history or social studies. Theater teachers are encouraged to have students make historical performances, technology teachers can work with students to create websites or documentaries. There are many opportunities for interdisciplinary studies.



Homeschool: Homeschool students are welcome to participate in History Day. Students are still required to have a parent or tutor as their advisor. Please reach out to the NYC Coordinator in advance if choosing this option so the project can be properly registered.

Independent: Students who are enrolled in a school that does not participate in History Day can still choose to create a project. The student will need a teacher, parent, or tutor to act as their advisor. Students whose schools do participate but choose to create a project independently will be included in the overall school project count and should speak with the teacher or administrator who runs the school History Day program before submitting their independent project.

UNDERSTANDING THIS YEAR'S CONTEST THEME

Each year National History Day (NHD) selects a theme to unite entries from all over the world. In accordance with the rubric, the annual theme should clearly and consistently connect to the project topic and argument. The theme should help guide students' topic selection as they narrow down the scope of their research.

The theme for 2026 is "Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History." This year students do not need to address all three parts of the theme. However, if the topic involves more than one, they should all be addressed. That said, it's hard to imagine one without the other. A successful revolution leads to reform, just as a controversial reform often leads to revolution. In both cases society is reacting to ideas, actions, or events. A reaction by an individual or society can in turn cause a revolution or reform. NHD describes this as a domino effect, a "chain reaction of changing societies and governments." Reaction is key to change; it connects revolution and reform. It would be wise to include at least two of the concepts in the project.

National History Day defines these three terms as follows:

Revolution: the forcible overthrow of a government or social order, in favor of a new system, or a dramatic and wide-reaching change in the way something works or is organized or in people's ideas about it.

Reaction: an action performed or a feeling experienced in response to a situation or event; the resistance or opposition to a force or movement.

Reform: the effort to change to a better state or form; to improve by alteration, substitution, abolition. Often a reaction to an idea.

Because these terms offer such large and complex ideas and movements, it's important for students to narrow down the focus of their NHD topic. This is a great year to focus locally, how has revolution and reaction impacted reform in your neighborhood, borough, or city? Revolutions can often be political, but also consider social history, economic history, art and culture, science, technology, and medicine. In what way did ordinary citizens shape a movement? How did they react, and why? What were the consequences? How have those with seemingly smaller voices made big impacts?

National History Day poses the following questions students should ask themselves as they work through their topic:

- ▶ What kind of ideas led to revolution?
- ▶ Who reacted to or was affected by a revolution or movement?
- ▶ Did the revolution result in reform? How and why, or why not?
- ▶ How can a revolution in one place influence reactions and reforms in another?

Adapted from the 2026 National History Day Theme Book and Video

SAMPLE TIMELINE

INTRODUCTION TO HISTORY DAY (WEEK 1)

Oct. 14, 2025	What Is History Day? Explain the purpose of History Day, read through the rulebook and make sure students understand the scope of what is involved.
Oct. 15, 2025	Define the Theme Understand the theme; look for examples.
Oct. 16, 2025	Brainstorm Brainstorm topics that might fit with the theme. Do some initial research to make sure the topic will have adequate sources.

RESEARCH (WEEKS 2-7)

Oct. 17, 2025	Topic Selection Understand the theme; look for examples.
Oct. 21-29, 2025	Note Taking & Research Begin to research. Find out the 5Ws.
Oct. 30 – Nov. 3, 2025	Research Question Create a research question based on the topic and related to the theme.
Nov. 5-7, 2025	Thesis Statement Craft a thesis statement. This should be an answer to the research question.
Nov. 10-21, 2025	Deep Research Continue to research diving in deeper to find evidence to support the thesis.
Nov. 24 – Dec. 2, 2025	Claims and Evidence Use the research to create claims supporting the thesis statement and can be backed up with evidence.

PROJECT CREATION (WEEKS 8-13)

Dec. 3, 2025	Choose a Category Select the category students will compete in: Documentary, Exhibit, Paper, Performance or Website.
Dec. 3-5, 2025	Project Outline Create a project outline taking into consideration the category and making sure to highlight the thesis, claims, and evidence.
Dec. 8-17, 2025	Project Creation Create the project, make sure to take into account category specific guidelines and rules.
Dec. 18-19, 2025	Annotated Bibliography Write the annotated bibliography including all the sources used.

Dec. 22, 2025 – Jan. 7, 2026	Revise Go back and make sure the project is just how the student imagined it.
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Jan. 8–9, 2026	Process Paper Write about the process of creating this project.
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FINETUNE (WEEKS 14–16)

Jan. 8–9, 2026	Peer Review Students can trade projects and give you constructive feedback.
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Jan. 12–20, 2026	Edit Make edits based on the feedback received from peers.
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Jan. 21, 2026	School Contest If needed to narrow down submission. This gives students time to make changes to their projects after being selected.
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Jan. 22–29, 2026	Revise & Edit Use the feedback received during the school contest make final edits.
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PROJECT SUBMISSION

Jan. 30, 2026	Submit Project By submitting projects by this date, there is time for troubleshooting and tech support if something goes wrong.
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Feb. 4, 2026	Registration Closes Absolute last day to submit History Day Projects for the NYC 2026 Contest.
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March 1, 2026	Judging ends/In- person NYCHD Final round judging ends for virtual submissions (paper, website, documentary) and the in-person contest is held for Performance and Exhibit at Brooklyn Public Library’s Central Library.
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LESSON: WHAT IS HISTORY DAY?

Aim Students will learn about the National History Day contest and what creating a History Day Project entails. Discuss what makes something a historical research project.

Materials

- ▶ History Day PowerPoint (optional)
- ▶ Project Examples: available on the Teacher Resource page scroll down to the bottom: bklynlibrary.org/content/resources-for-teachers



Procedure

1. Explain that the class is going to work on a multi-week historical research project as part of New York City History Day.
2. For history day students will work individually or in groups to create a project based on the theme: Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History. These projects can be a paper, but may also be an exhibit, performance, documentary, or website.
3. New York City History is part of the National History network which includes students from around the world. All the projects follow the same guidelines and rules.
4. Ask students: What do you think of when you think “Research?” Collect responses and see if any patterns arise. Highlight the various skills involved and explain that they will rely on these skills for their History Day project.
5. Explain that this project will be a lot of work and take a lot of concentration, but as a class you will break everything down into small, manageable parts. Even if you’re working on different projects, you’ll be learning the skills all together.
6. Group students and have them analyze an example project. First, ask students to discuss what they notice, what they like about the project and what they think could be improved upon. Second, distribute a rubric and ask them as a group to fill out the rubric. Third, discuss the rubric and observations as a class and find out if the students had any questions about the project or the rubric they viewed.
7. Follow-up on any remaining questions or concerns.

Notes

- ▶ You may choose to limit the topics students can pick from, or limit what category students compete in. Adjust your discussion accordingly.
- ▶ All digital materials and handouts can be found on the flash drive included in the kit and in the accompanying google drive.

LESSON:

DEFINE THE THEME— BRAINSTORM TOPICS

Aim Students will understand the 2026 History Day theme, “Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History” and begin to formulate ideas for their own topic.

Materials

- ▶ PowerPoint
- ▶ Paper and pencil
- ▶ “Choosing a Topic—Part I” worksheet

Procedure

1. Explain that each year National History Day selects a theme that all students must follow. The theme for 2026 is “Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History.”
2. Watch the 10-minute NHD 2026 theme video wbit.ly/nhd-theme (optional).
3. Review the one-page theme description (page 1).
4. Go over the definition for each of the terms.
5. Break students into six groups. Have each group brainstorm topics that fit with one of the three terms (each terms should be covered by two groups). Encourage students to think about their personal interests and to think locally.
6. After coming up with at least five topics, ask groups to pick one and explain why it connects to their term.
7. Finally, ask groups to consider if their chosen topic could be connected with any of the other terms.
8. Share out with the class and discuss what kinds of patterns or ideas they’re noticing.
9. Individually, have students fill out the “Choosing a Topic—Part I” worksheet to help them brainstorm a topic.

Next steps Students will continue to narrow down their topics using “Choosing a Topic—Part II,” and “Research Brainstorm” worksheets.

Notes

- ▶ If students are working in groups, you have the option to select groups prior to a topic and let students come up with the topic together—or—groups can be created based on the topics they expressed interest after completing “Topic Brainstorm worksheet Part I”
- ▶ All digital materials and handouts can be found on the flash drive included in the kit and in the accompanying google drive. Worksheets can also be copied directly from this guide.

WORKSHEET:
CHOOSING A TOPIC—PART 1

Choosing a topic can be a very difficult task: how can you narrow down all of human history?! You will want to start with the History Day theme and narrow down your ideas to a specific topic you're passionate about. If you're not excited about your topic, your project may reflect that. Follow your passions from a big idea to a specific one.

REVOLUTION

REACTION

REFORM

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

What comes to mind when you think of: _____

What general historical topics are you interested in? _____

Choose one of the topics above, how is it connected to one of the theme terms (Revolution, Reaction, Reform)?

Your topic does NOT need to address ALL three, but if all three are present, you should be able to identify them.

What is your interest in the topic? Innovation, strategy, social impact, etc.? _____

Can you identify a single person, group, place, or event that are of particular interest? Can it be narrowed down? Is your topic about a specific moment in history? _____

What questions can you ask about your topic? Try and ask a HOW question. Can you include the theme key words REVOLUTION, REACTION or REFORM in your questions? _____

WORKSHEET:
CHOOSING A TOPIC—PART 2

Using the topic you choose in part I, consider the “so what” factor. An effective project not only describes the event/person/thing/development, but also analyzes and places it within a historical context. Are you able to make an argument showing the reader why your topic matters? Can you back up your argument with primary research? If your reader says, “Why this topic? So what?” will you have an answer?

Is your topic more than 20 years old? If it is not, you might want to choose a new topic. It can be difficult to have historical perspective and understand the consequence of something so recent. **Yes** **No**

Choose a specific time span or time period. If your time span is very long it will be difficult to research. Try narrowing it down to no more than 10 years. _____

Identify an event, action, or choice. Be specific! _____

What is the geographic location? Your project should focus on a specific region. If you have too broad a topic, your research won't be as in-depth. _____

Re-write your topic considering the narrowed focus you've detailed above: _____

How are people affected by your topic? Legally, politically, economically, culturally, socially?

What is the cause and effect of your topic? What led up to the event your topic explores and what happened after? What was the impact or change? _____

Give three reasons why the topic is significant to history. It can be important locally, at a state or national, or international level. _____

LESSON: NOTE TAKING

Aim Students will learn effective note taking to support their research.

Materials

- ▶ Sample secondary source (in appendix p. 71)
- ▶ Taking Notes worksheet (p. 15)

Procedure

1. Explain to students how being organized and taking notes is important for a successful research project. Students should keep all their notes in one place, such as a single word document, a notebook, or a notecard box, a folder. Taking notes allows us to have a record of the information we found so we can refer back to it as we craft our projects. When taking notes we want to write down the “noteworthy” details. These can include: people, places, events, dates, and details related to your research topic. We will practice a method based on “Cornell Notes.”
2. Hand out the secondary source article and note taking worksheet.
3. Explain that students should look for the bibliographic information so that it can be properly cited later. Depending on the source, they may need different information. Within the sections of the notes grid, they will be looking for answers to the 5W’s: Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How.
4. When they’ve read the source and taken notes, they should turn and talk to a partner to see if they picked out the same pieces of important information. Where did they differ and why?

Next steps Have extra Cornell Note grids ready for students (a blank copy available in the appendix, p. tktk), or have them draw a few in their History Day notebooks. A .docx version of a blank Cornell note page can be found on the flash drive. Students can have access to the file digitally or printed. Remind them that every source should have at least one note page dedicated to it to keep their information and citations accessible.

Notes

- ▶ To give students a bigger challenge, try having them take notes on a primary source. A primary source article on Emily Warren Roebling is available in the appendix (p.iv).

BEGINNING RESEARCH RESOURCES

Research, particularly primary source and archival research is very personal. Each student or classroom will be focused on different topics, time periods, and places making a single standard lesson tricky to come by. The next section of this guide includes resources to help your students with their research process. This includes worksheets, websites, guides, explanations, definitions, and more. Our hope is as teachers you can pick and choose what works for you and your History Day researchers.

The History Day coordinator at the Center for Brooklyn History is also available to help should you run into any questions or concerns. We can offer advice, additional resources not provided in this guide, visits to your classroom, and free class trips to the Center for Brooklyn History. To discuss scheduling a NYCHD field trip (or any other History Day questions you may run into) please email nychd@bklynlibrary.org.

Useful links to help students understand the archival research process:

- ▶ A short comic about the archival research process by historian B. Erin Cole. Please note that some of the language may not be suitable for all students: littlebraincomics.com/archives-time
- ▶ A guide from 2011 on using an archive for effective research by Laura Schmidt for the Society of American Archivists. archivists.org/usingarchives



For a deeper dive, Library of Congress in collaboration with National History Day has put together two guides for students, however, they are dense and lengthy (each just under 300 pages).

- ▶ Guide to student research and historical argumentation: bklynlib.org/guide-student-research-argument
- ▶ Finding, Analyzing, and Constructing History: A Research Guide for Students: bklynlib.org/constructing-history



WORKSHEET: **RESEARCH BRAINSTORM**

Before you settle on a research question you need to collect some initial research. This should be fairly broad to make sure you've chosen a topic that will lend itself to an interesting project with ample resources. You may have already done some of this while deciding on a topic. Start by thinking of keywords. A keyword is a term specific to your topic, you may have hit on some of these in the choosing a topic section : think about who, what, when and where.

List at least five keywords for your research topic:

Start your search on Google or an archival database. If your keyword is a phrase, remember to put it in quotation marks so you're searching for the entire phrase and not each individual word.

Find at least one primary source related to your topic. As you find information, be sure to write down the bibliographical information so you're ready to write your annotated bibliography.

Title: _____

Author: _____

Date published: _____ Publisher: _____

Date accessed (website): _____

URL (if applicable): _____

What questions do you have after looking at the primary source? _____

What information have you learned from the primary source? _____

Are there new keywords you want to look into? Remember, this is not the last time you will be doing re-search. You're just getting started _____

WORKSHEET:
OBSERVATION & INFERENCE

OBSERVATION

What do you see? What do you notice first? What details do you notice?

INFERENCE

What do you think, based on what you see?

QUESTION

What else do you want to know? What questions do you have about what you observe?

LESSON: SUMMARIZING SOURCES

Aim Students will learn how to summarize and paraphrase sources.

Materials

- ▶ Short picture book, or a short easy to understand written source (excerpts work fine)
- ▶ Paper and pen/pencil

Procedure

1. Divide class into 3 groups. Number each group 1, 2, or 3. Have the students in group 1 read their the source quietly.
2. Partner someone from group 1 with someone from group 2. Have the student from group 1, verbally summarize what they read to the student from group 2.
3. Have each person from group 2 record, in their own words, the summary given to them from their partner in group 1.
4. Now partner each person from group 2 with someone from group 3. Have the partner in group 3, read the summary written by the partner in group 2. Ask them to summarize in one sentence. Meanwhile, ask the partner from group 1 to write their own one sentence summary of the source they read.
5. Have the three group members come together and compare their one sentence summaries. Did the most important information come through?

Next steps Have students practice reading paragraphs and re-writing them in their own words to practice paraphrasing.

WORKSHEET:
UNDERSTANDING PRIMARY SOURCES

Source name: _____

Describe this source: _____

What type of original document is it? Check all that apply

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper | <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Transcription | <input type="checkbox"/> Handwritten |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Government Report | <input type="checkbox"/> Diary | <input type="checkbox"/> Audio |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Document | <input type="checkbox"/> Letter | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Atlas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Certificate | <input type="checkbox"/> Photograph | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (explain below): |

When was the source created? _____

Who created the source? _____

What locations does the source mention? (where it was made, where it references, etc.) _____

Summarize what you already know about who created the source: _____

Summarize what you already know about the time period: _____

Who was the original intended audience? _____

List 3 key words or phrases that you think are most important in the source:

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____

What is the purpose of the source? Give 2 pieces of evidence to support your opinion

Purpose: _____

Evidence 1: _____

Evidence 2: _____

2 Pieces of evidence that tell you something new about your topic:

Evidence 1: _____

Evidence 2: _____

Does the source agree with your assumptions and opinions about your topic? Why or why not? Use evidence.

What questions do you still have? _____

WORKSHEET: **ANALYZING A PHOTOGRAPH**

Step 1: Observe

Name the source: _____

Study the photograph for 2 minutes. Form an overall impression of the photograph and then examine individual items. Next, divide the photo into quadrants (4 parts, as if you put a + right through the middle of the photo), looking at each section on it's own, what new details do you discover?

Be as specific as you can, what places and objects do you see, what kinds of activities are happening?

Step 2: Infer

Based on what you have observed above, list two things you might infer from this photograph. An inference, is a guess about something based on information you can see. Inferences should be backed up by evidence (the details of what you see).

Inference 1: _____

Evidence 1: _____

Inference 2: _____

Evidence 2: _____

Step 3: Question

What is a question you have about the photograph? _____

Where might you look for the answer to your question? _____

SOURCES FOR RESEARCH

Research projects include information from many different sources. Explore the list of primary and secondary sources, and think about the types of sources that could help you answer your research question. History Day projects are required to include both primary and secondary sources.

A primary source is:

A document from the time your topic took place

- ▶ personal correspondence and diaries
- ▶ works of art and literature (sometimes)
- ▶ speeches and oral histories
- ▶ audio and video recordings
- ▶ photographs
- ▶ advertisements
- ▶ laws and legislative hearings
- ▶ census or demographic records
- ▶ plant and animal specimens
- ▶ ephemera, (tickets, invitations, menus,

A secondary source is:

A source that provides interpretation, commentary, or analysis, a second-hand account and often based on primary sources

- ▶ textbooks
- ▶ dictionaries
- ▶ encyclopedias
- ▶ biographies
- ▶ topic expert, such as a historian or professor

Both a primary and secondary source:

Some sources can be both depending upon who created the source when.

▶ **Newspaper/magazine/journal article...**

PRIMARY SOURCE: contemporary news events, first-hand account
SECONDARY SOURCE: milestone commemorations, historical overviews, a second-hand account

▶ **Documentary film...**

PRIMARY SOURCE: footage from the time, interview from someone who experienced the topic first-hand
SECONDARY SOURCE: topic expert or second-hand source interview

▶ **Nonfiction text...**

PRIMARY SOURCE: original research, historical findings or information
SECONDARY SOURCE: commentary or analysis about a topic the author didn't experience first

FREE RESOURCES FOR PRIMARY SOURCE RESEARCH

LIBRARIES AND PUBLIC ARCHIVES

The Three Library Systems of New York City:

- ▶ Brooklyn Public Library: bklynlibrary.org
- ▶ Queens Public Library: queenslibrary.org
- ▶ New York Public Library: nypl.org

Anyone in NYC can get a free library card from any or all of the public libraries regardless of which borough you reside in. There are library branches throughout the city as well as digital resources that vary between the three systems. Additionally, NYPL has many research libraries, archives and centers covering various topics and special themes.

Center for Brooklyn History:

bklynlibrary.org/cbh/collections/collections-resources

The archival branch of the Brooklyn Public Library documents the history of Brooklyn. Resources include research guides which are a helpful place to start when looking for topics on Brooklyn. CBH is the host of New York City History Day.

Brooklyn Newsstand: bklyn.newspapers.com

A portal for online historic Brooklyn newspapers from the Center for Brooklyn History including *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, a daily newspaper published from 1841 to 1955.

Digital Public Library of America: dp.la

DPLA collaborates with libraries, archives, and museums around the country to compile free digital resources. DPLA has ways to search, browse by topic or look at primary source sets.

Library of Congress: loc.gov

The largest library in the world, LOC is the main research arm of the U.S. Congress and home of the U.S. Copyright Office.

National Archives: archives.gov

The National Archives and Records Administration holds all documents and materials created by the United States federal government.

New York State Archives: digitalcollections.archives.nysed.gov/

NYSA has over 270 million records from NY's colonial and state governments dating back to 1630. *Most States have an archive. Depending on your topic, this can be a great place to look for digitized primary sources.*

MUSEUMS

Museum of the City of New York Collections:

collections.mcny.org

MCNY has 750,000 objects in their collection with 190,000 available digitally.

New York Historical Society: *nyhistory.org*

New York's first museum strives to tell the stories of New York and America.

Many museums have some of their collections digitally available for free. Historical societies, natural history museums, historic houses, and art museums are great places to look for primary sources.

NEWSPAPER ARCHIVES

Chronicling America: *chroniclingamerica.loc.gov*

Search America's historic newspaper pages from 1777–1963.

Students who advance to the National contest and use Chronicling America will be eligible for a special prize funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Digitized Harper's Weekly: *harpweek.com*

An influential newspaper running from 1857–1916

This is a non-exhaustive list of free research resources.

*Universities and cultural institutions will often have archives, and many have digital resources — but sometimes their collections are available by appointment only. If you would like help contacting these institutions feel free to reach out to **nychd@bklynlibrary.org** and we can help you make research appointments.*

QUESTIONING

When you do research, it's important to keep asking questions to help guide your search. The basic questions are: **who**, **what**, **where**, **why** and **how**. Below are some example questions that might be helpful in thinking through the full scope of your project.

- Who**
- ▶ was impacted? Was the impact positive or negative?
 - ▶ made decisions? Who was a bystander?
 - ▶ is telling the story? Whose perspective do we have information on?
 - ▶ is left out of the story? Whose voice do we not hear from?
 - ▶ were the critics at the time? Are there critics today?
-

- What**
- ▶ are the causes and consequences of this event/person/place/time?
 - ▶ was life like during this time? What were the conditions? Were they the same for everyone?
 - ▶ were the obstacles faced?
 - ▶ is another perspective on this topic? Could someone else come to different conclusions?
 - ▶ is significant about this topic?
 - ▶ biases are evident in the research? Are they biases of the time (found in primary sources) or have they come about through later analysis (found in secondary sources)?
 - ▶ is left out of the narrative?
 - ▶ assumptions are made about this time/ place/event/person? What is the real story?
 - ▶ what terms do you need to define in the context of your topic?
 - ▶ are similar events to your topic either before or after?
-

- When**
- ▶ did the event take place/ the person live?
 - ▶ did the event become relevant or well-known?
 - ▶ did the events leading up to your topic occur?
-

- Where**
- ▶ did the event take place?
 - ▶ are your sources coming from? Are they reliable?
Is there a breadth of source types?
 - ▶ was the narrative of your topic developed?
 - ▶ did the responsibility come from?
-

-
- Why**
- ▶ is your topic important? Why is it important to you and why is it important to someone else? Why is it important in the scope of understanding history? Is the topic still relevant today?
 - ▶ is the topic described this way? Why do the sources you're using exist? Might there be sources you would like but can't find? Why might this be?
 - ▶ was the event allowed to happen?
 - ▶ do people have this right? Do they still have it today? Why or why not?
 - ▶ is there a need to re-examine this history?

-
- How**
- ▶ did the topic impact history at the time?
 - ▶ does the topic make an impact today?
 - ▶ did the topic affect different people/groups of people?
 - ▶ do we know about this topic today? Who were the record keepers? Who first re-discovered it?
 - ▶ can we learn from this?

LESSON:
RESEARCH QUESTIONS
—PART I, GROUP PRACTICE

Aim To help student formulate a research question to guide their History Day research.

Materials

- ▶ PowerPoint (optional)
- ▶ Paper and pencil
- ▶ Primary source: you can choose your own image or use “How to do it” from the Center for Brooklyn History’s Brooklyn Daily Eagle Photographs collection a copy of which can be found in the appendix (p. 75)

Procedure

1. Turn-and-talk: How does asking questions help with research?
2. Have students share out with the class
3. Explain that in groups they will review a primary source and ask as many questions about the source as possible. They will not answer the questions, nor do they need to be able to answer them to ask them. They don’t need to pause to discuss the questions, judge the questions, or answer the questions. One member of the group will be the scribe and write down all the question just as the group members state it. Make sure each one is stated as a question, not a statement.
4. Set a 5-minute timer and have students begin. Teachers should not intervene except to remind them of the guidelines. Avoid giving feedback or comments on the questions.
5. Once the time is up, explain that the group will categorize their questions into open and closed. A closed question can be answered with yes, no, or one word, i.e: there is a single, simple, answer. An open question requires explanation and possibly more research. The answer may be debatable. Groups should put an “O” next to open questions and a “C” next to closed.
6. Set a timer for 2–3 minutes. As the teacher, aim to be as neutral as possible.
7. After they have labeled their questions, bring the class together for a short discussion.
 - ➔ **What are some advantages or disadvantages to closed questions?**

ADVANTAGES: help find basic information and facts. Get a sense of background information. Can usually be answered easily.

DISADVANTAGES: They don't provide much nuance, they don't account for multiple perspectives.

→ **What are the advantages or disadvantages of open questions?**

ADVANTAGES: Opportunity for nuance, accounts for multiple perspectives, need many sources to answer.

DISADVANTAGES: hard to answer without initial background knowledge, not always easy to find answers, takes longer to answer because of a need for many sources.

8. Ask the group to choose one open question and try and change it to a closed question, and take one closed question and try and rephrase it to be an open question.
9. Finally, ask the group to put a star next to the three questions they think are most interesting or would be most useful in researching the primary source. Have them share out some of these questions with the class.

Next steps

Now that students have practice writing and expanding questions, you can move on to creating History Day specific questions. Next class begin "Lesson: Research Questions—Part II, History Day"

Notes

All digital materials and handouts can be found on the flash drive included in the kit and in the accompanying google drive. Worksheets can also be copied directly from this guide.

LESSON:
RESEARCH QUESTIONS
—PART 2, HISTORY DAY

Aim To help student formulate a research question to guide their History Day research.

Materials

- ▶ PowerPoint (optional)
- ▶ Paper and pencil
- ▶ Research Question worksheet

Procedure

1. As a class, review the difference of an open and closed question.
2. Ask: Which is an open ended question: “How many championships has LeBron James won?” or “How has LeBron James impacted the NBA?”
 - **“How many championships has LeBron James won?”** is not complex, cannot be debated, would only need one source to answer.
 - **“How has LeBron James impacted the NBA?”** is more complex, the questions explores impact and change, has more than one debatable answer, would need many sources to come to a conclusion.
3. Ask: Which is a more useful research question: “Is Taylor Swift better than Beyonce?” or “Why have Taylor Swift and Beyonce dominated pop music for the last decade?”
 - **“Is Taylor Swift better than Beyoncé?”** doesn’t reflect change, is a yes or no question, subjective—it’s about someone’s opinion.
 - **“Why have Taylor Swift and Beyoncé dominated pop music for the last decade?”** is complex, the question asks about influence and significance, has more than one debatable answer, would need many source to come to a conclusion.
4. Ask students to think about what interests them about their topic. One a separate piece of paper have them write down all the questions that come to mind. Remind them to write down everything and not judge themselves.
5. Once they have a bunch (try and fill the page,) ask them to mark an “O” next to open questions and a “C” next to closed.
6. Can they expand any of the closed into open questions?

7. Have the students look carefully at their list of questions. Do any questions pop out or are particularly attention grabbing? Are there any patterns that arise? Is there something they keep gravitating back to?
8. Have them put a star next to three of their most interesting open questions. Which one do they think will need the most research to answer.
9. Using that question fill out the “Research Question” worksheet.

Notes

All digital materials and handouts can be found on the flash drive included in the kit and in the accompanying google drive. Worksheets can also be copied directly from this guide.

WORKSHEET: RESEARCH QUESTION

Try writing out a question that is simple, specific, researchable, arguable, and relevant to the theme.
Think about using words like compare, impact, change, cause, effect, and influence.

Write out your question: _____

Does your question relate directly to the theme, “Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History?”

Yes No

Explain how: _____

Is your question arguable?

Yes No

List an alternative perspective: _____

Is your question:

Historical? (Related to something in history.)

Yes No

Not easily google-able? (You can't find the answer in one Google search or on Wikipedia.)

Yes No

Connected to the History Day theme?

Yes No

Arguable? (Someone could have another perspective.)

Yes No

Is a how or why question?

Yes No

If you answered “No” to any of these questions, go back and edit your research question.

LESSON: THESIS STATEMENTS

Aim	Students will come away with an understanding of historical argumentation and be able to write a strong thesis statement for their History Day Project.
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Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ PowerPoint (optional)▶ Paper and Pencil▶ Thesis Worksheet I
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Procedure	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Explain to students that once they have done enough research to begin formulating answers to their research question, they should be able to put together an argument.2. A historical research project must have a few different arguments, or claims (sometimes referred to as assertions), that are each backed up by evidence. These claims combined defend the thesis. While the claims need to be backed by evidence, they are also arguable. Someone might have done the same research and come to different conclusions. This can be known as a counterclaim. Their job in creating a History Day project is to use the evidence to prove their claims to be the strongest, most impactful, and minimize the impact of the counterclaims.3. The thesis statement explains to the audience what your project seeks to prove, a summary of their position. A thesis statement must be arguable—someone can make a reasonable counterclaim—and it must be historically accurate. It should also be concise, usually one—two sentences. While it is an arguable perspective, it should not be formatted as an I statement, nor should it be too vague or too obvious. A middle ground containing depth and a unique position.4. Give the example: “As the first Black player in Major League Baseball, Jackie Robinson was a revolutionary force in reforming the league to be more inclusive, leading the way for future players of color; thus, Robinson was the most influential baseball player of his time.” Ask students to highlight the topic (Jackie Robinson), underline the parameters of research (first Black player in MLB), bracket the argument (most influential baseball player of his time), star the significance (leading the way for future players of color), and circle the relationship to the theme (a revolutionary force in reforming the league to be more inclusive).
------------------	--

5. Ask students to check that the Jackie Robinson thesis statement has all the other parts of a thesis statement discussed earlier. Clear topic, specific argument, concise, supported by evidence, is a statement not a question, but is not an “I” statement. This statement is arguable. A different historian could argue that someone else was more influential than Robinson. However: it is still based in evidence because while his importance can be argued, Robinson breaking the “color barrier” for Major League Baseball in 1947 is fact, and statistics showing how he led the league during his years of playing can only be argued in their importance, not their existence. Additionally, quotes from future Players of Color can further strengthen the argument for how he was a positive force for change.
6. In groups have students work on the rest of the Thesis Statement Practice worksheet.
7. Explain: For many, defining the thesis statement is the most difficult part of the research process. However, once you have a strong, specific, and defined argument, the rest will come much easier. The thesis will be the guide to finish your research and craft your History Day project. Everyone finds their thesis statement in different ways. It will take revisions, but let the research question and preliminary research guide the way.

Next steps

Have students fill out the Writing Your Thesis Statement worksheet asking them to try both method one and two. Work with students to get to a first draft thesis statement.

Notes

- ▶ All digital materials and handouts can be found on the flash drive included in the kit and in the accompanying google drive. Worksheets can also be copied directly from this guide.
- ▶ To give students more practice with thesis statements, have them try this activity again only have them first identifying the thesis within a larger article or paragraph and then pinpoint the various defining aspects of a thesis statement.

WORKSHEET: THESIS STATEMENT PRACTICE

For each statement below: Highlight the topic. Underline the parameters of your research. [Bracket your argument.] *Star the significance*. Circle the relationship to theme.

Thesis 1:

As the first Black player in Major League Baseball, Jackie Robinson was a revolutionary force in reforming the league to be more inclusive, leading the way for future players of color; thus, Robinson was the most influential baseball player of his time.

Thesis 2:

Jacob Riis's "How the Other Half Lives," published in 1980 as reaction to the harsh living conditions of immigrants in New York City's Lower East Side, directly caused housing reform by City government to protect working-class New Yorkers including the creation of the Tenement House Act of 1895.

What is missing from Thesis 2? _____

Thesis 3:

By creating a more accessible path between the cities of New York and Brooklyn, the Brooklyn Bridge, opened in May 1883, reformed New York and led the way to cement New York City as the economic and social capital of the United State, thus making the Brooklyn Bridge a revolutionary piece of engineering in American History.

How would you change Thesis 3? _____

WORKSHEET: WRITING YOUR THESIS STATEMENT

Method One: Filter down your arguments

Start with **three** strong pieces of evidence. What is your analysis of the evidence? What claims are you making based on your analysis? Pull the claims together and write out your main argument.

Evidence

What happened?

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Analysis

How and why?

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Claim

What does it mean?

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Argument/thesis: Summary of claims—the “so what?”

Read through your thesis statement, can you identify the following: Highlight the topic. Underline the parameters of your research. [Bracket your argument.] *Star the significance*. Circle the relationship to theme.

Method Two: Research question → Thesis Statement

To craft your thesis statement, start with your research question. Turn your question into a statement. Make sure you address the topic, parameters of research, relationship to the theme, an argument, and the significance. Add in any missing information. Are you left with a thesis statement?

Write out your research question: _____

Turn the question into a statement: _____

Read through your thesis statement, can you identify the following: Highlight the topic. Underline the parameters of your research. [Bracket your argument.] *Star the significance*. Circle the relationship to theme.

Review your two thesis statements, does you prefer one over the other? Should they be combined? Select your draft thesis statement. Review again, what is being left out? Your thesis statement should touch on the who, what, when, where, and why of your topic while defining your perspective on the importance and impact. If you're missing any pieces, think about how to add them in.

Layout your context:

- ▶ Who is involved? Individuals? Groups?
- ▶ When did it happen?
- ▶ Where did it happen?
- ▶ Why did it happen? What was the direct lead-up?
- ▶ What social, cultural, political, or economic belief effected your topic?

Write out your new thesis statement: _____

LESSON: CLAIMS & EVIDENCE

Aim Students learn how to make arguments backed up with evidence.

Materials ▶ Claims and Evidence worksheet

- Procedure**
1. Have the class divide themselves into their favorite breakfast foods. Suggested groups as follows: 1. Pancake, 2. Cereal, 3. Eggs, 4. Bagel
 2. Have each group come up with three reasons why their breakfast is the best.
 3. Bring the class back together and have each group present their argument.
 4. After initial arguments have been made, the groups can discuss counterpoints to any of the other breakfasts.
 5. Once again have the class present their argument.
 6. As a class discuss what made for better arguments. Which pieces of evidence were most effective.
 7. Have students fill out the Claims and Evidence worksheet.
-

Next steps Have students begin to reflect on their research notes. Encourage them to begin coming up with claims based on the evidence they have to support it. Remind them to look back to their research question. What pieces of evidence help to answer the question.

Using this information students should fill out the Organize your Project worksheet regardless of what category of project they're completing.

Notes To add an extra level of complexity to the initial debate, you can pre-print information on each of the food categories (articles, recipes, nutrition information, even just a Wikipedia article).

WORKSHEET: CLAIMS & EVIDENCE

Popularity of the Bridge.

The Bridge Trustees did not meet yesterday, as might have been expected, but the monthly statement of the treasurer, Mr. Alden S. Swan, was prepared for presentation and was given to the reporters. It is an interesting document in several particulars. As a justification of the low toll policy which the EAGLE advocated so long and which was at last adopted by a small majority it is especially valuable. It shows that the total receipts for the month amounted to \$51,753.69, or \$10,325.69 more than the receipts for August, 1884. So that not only have the people of the two cities been benefited by a lower toll, but this advantage has been gained hand in hand with an increase of revenue. Moreover, the limit of usefulness which in the judgment of far seeing men would eventually be reached by the bridge, namely, the transportation of 30,000,000 people annually, is being steadily approximated. The number of passengers who crossed the bridge in August was exactly 1,924,649, or at very nearly the rate of 21,000,000 a year. It is probable that the mere completion of the bridge improvements contemplated on the New York side and the increase of transportation facilities will bring the annual service of the structure up to the limit. The rapidity with which Brooklyn is growing bids us reflect that before many years have passed the old problem of transportation across the East River will again come up in another form.

"Popularity of the Bridge." *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* [Brooklyn, NY], 15 September

Write a two sentence summary of the article:

Claim: The Brooklyn Bridge was integral to the growth of Brooklyn.

Evidence 1: "The number of passengers who crossed the bridge in August was exactly 1,924,649, or at very nearly the rate of 21,000,000 a year."

Evidence 1: _____

Write your own claim based on the information provided in this article. Make sure to back it up with two pieces of evidence.

Claim: _____

Evidence 1: _____

Evidence 2: _____

WORKSHEET:
ORGANIZE YOUR RESEARCH

Regardless of the category you enter for National History Day—documentary, exhibit, paper, performance, or website—you need to pause and organize all of your research. Working through this research organizer will help you strategize the most important information to include in your project. The basic structure of any project will be: 1. an introduction that sets the scene, states the importance of the topic, lays out the thesis, and explains important background information; 2. claims that are supported with evidence, each supporting the thesis; and 3. the conclusion which re-states the thesis and explains the aftermath of the topic and why it is still important today. Do this step with your notes close at hand. You'll want to refer to them to include important evidence to support of your thesis.

Research Topic: _____

Research Question: _____

Thesis Statement: _____

Define the theme terms you're exploring (Revolution, Reaction, and/or Reform): _____

What background is needed to understand your topic: _____

You can have as many claims as you need to support your thesis. Due to word limits set by History Day, three to five is recommended. Each claim can have more than one piece of evidence as long as they are all connected.

Claim to support your thesis: _____

Evidence to support the claim (use bullet points for now): _____

How the evidence supports the claim and thesis: _____

Are there any counterclaims that can be made against your argument? If so, it's important to explain how you plan to acknowledge and refute them: _____

Your conclusion pulls all the pieces of the project together. While you want to re-state the importance of the topic and summarize your evidence you also want to leave the reader with a strong last impression. The conclusion is where you explain the aftermath of the topic and why it is still important today. You should go over new perspectives, changes and transformations, and any other effects or impact your topic may have had.

Restate your thesis statement in different words: _____

Summarize your main evidence: _____

Explain the Aftermath...

New Perspectives: _____

Change and transformation: _____

Effects and Impact: _____

PROJECT FORMATS

National History Day allows an individual or group (up to five people) to create a project in one of five categories:

- ▶ Documentary
- ▶ Exhibit
- ▶ Performance
- ▶ Website
- ▶ Paper (individual projects only)

When choosing a category, students should reflect on the following:

- ▶ Do you have a lot of visual sources that you would like to include in your project? The Documentary, Exhibit, and Website categories should have a big emphasis on the inclusion of visuals.
- ▶ What are your personal skills and abilities? Do you love working with technology and building websites or videos? Do you love writing, acting, or designing things? How could one of the project categories build off the skills you have?
- ▶ Is there a category that you are really interested in but not sure about making a project for? What skills would you need to learn in order to feel confident about making a project?
- ▶ Talk with a friend or adult you trust and share your reflections with them: what kind of project will play to your strengths and the strengths of your research topic? What kind of project will you really enjoy working on? What kind of project do you have time and resources for?
- ▶ Consider reviewing the NHD Contest Rules and Evaluation before choosing your project category so you know what to expect. Each category has specific guidelines including word limits. Go to nhd.org/en/contest/contest-rules/. The student page of the NYCHD website also has guides to understanding and submitting each category. You can watch the NYCHD Video Playlist to get an idea of what to expect with each category.

Go to bklynlib.org/NYCHD-youtube or scan the QR codes left.



NYCHD
Video Playlist



NYCHD Website



NHD Contest Rules

As stated earlier, teachers should keep in mind that each school is only allowed to submit **two (2) projects per category**. This means, for example, each school can have up to two (2) individual documentaries and two (2) group documentaries, but NOT three (3) individual documentaries. If you think you will have more than the limit for submission to the city contest, you can consider doing a school contest first. See page 64 for details on holding a school contest.

WHAT TO INCLUDE:

DOCUMENTARY

NHD Documentaries are 10-minute original productions scripted based on student research. When creating a documentary make sure that:

- ▶ the audio is appropriate to the topic and easy to understand.
- ▶ the visuals are appropriate to the topic and support the narrative you're telling.
- ▶ your narration is free of grammatical errors and the recording is easy to hear.
- ▶ the volume of the audio is even, you don't want it to get suddenly too loud or too quiet.
- ▶ your analysis is clear and balanced between your own words and evidence you introduce. Make sure your point and your argument come across, not just the words of others.
- ▶ sources used in the documentary are credited at the end and in the annotated bibliography.

Things to consider when creating your documentary:

- ▶ you're telling a story, so have a beginning, middle, and end.
- ▶ make direct connections to the theme. Don't make the audience guess.
- ▶ include video and images to help tell your narrative and make the movie more dynamic.
- ▶ look for recorded speeches or oral histories to add a new voice. You can even try to conduct your own interviews.
- ▶ the tone of the documentary should match the tone of the topic.

Notes:

New York City History Day regional contest will be hybrid in 2026. The Documentary category will be judged in person on Sunday, March 1, 2026 at Brooklyn Public Library's Central Library at Grand Army Plaza. However, students must still register and submit written materials and a draft of their documentary online by 10 pm on Wednesday, February 4.

Further History Day rules and guidelines can be found online at nhd.org/en/contest/contest-rules/



PROJECT CHECKLIST: DOCUMENTARY

General Rules

- Topic clearly relates to annual theme.
- I/we independently researched and created this documentary.
- This is an original entry made for this year's contest.
- I/we have not used any improper assistance.
- I/we understand using someone else's work without proper credit is plagiarism and will result in disqualification.
- I/we did not use AI to help us create our project.
- Project includes a properly formatted title page.
- Process paper is no more than 500 words.
- Project includes a properly formatted annotated bibliography.

Documentary Rules

- My/our documentary is an original production with a script based on my/our research.
- Documentary is no more than 10 minutes.
- I/we created and produced the documentary project. I/we operated all equipment, including recording and editing software.
- I/we wrote and narrated this documentary. I/we have provided any narration, voice-overs, or dramatizations. The only voices or images on the documentary belonging to members of the group, the people we interviewed, or primary source audio/visual clips.
- This project contains no material created by non-participants specifically for this project.
- The documentary includes brief, readable, source credits for photographs, moving footage, interviews, music, and images used in the project. Sources credits are included within the 10-minute time limit. All sources used in the project are cited in the annotated bibliography.

WHAT TO INCLUDE: EXHIBIT

NHD Exhibits are three-dimensional freestanding displays of student research and analysis. When creating an exhibit make sure that:

- ▶ there are no more than 500 student-composed words.
- ▶ the display is no larger than 40 inches wide, 30 inches deep, and six feet high—or—if the exhibit is circular or rotating, it is no more than 30 inches in diameter.
- ▶ your text is free of grammatical errors and appropriate to the topic.
- ▶ any visuals and media are connected to the topic and enhance the argument.
- ▶ visuals and quotes are credited on the exhibit and in the annotated bibliography.
- ▶ the structure of and organization are clear and help guide the viewer through your argument.
- ▶ all colors and fonts are legible and match the tone of your topic.
- ▶ your analysis is clear and balanced between your own words and evidence you introduce. Make sure your point and your argument come across, not just the words of others.

Things to consider when creating your exhibit:

- ▶ you're telling a story, so have a beginning, middle, and end.
- ▶ state your perspective in your introduction; this is your thesis. Use your conclusion to show lasting impact.
- ▶ be creative in your layout and presentation. Think outside the box, but don't let the display interfere with legibility.
- ▶ the most important information should be in big clear font and centered.
- ▶ be succinct in your writing and use quotes sparingly to support your argument. The quotes should not be making the argument for you.

Notes:

New York City History Day regional contest will be hybrid in 2026. The Exhibit category will be judged in person on Sunday, March 1, 2026 at Brooklyn Public Library's Central Library at Grand Army Plaza. However, students must still register and submit written materials and a process photo of their exhibit online by 10 pm on Wednesday, February 4.

Further History Day rules and guidelines can be found online at nhd.org/en/contest/contest-rules/



PROJECT CHECKLIST: EXHIBIT

General Rules

- Topic clearly relates to annual theme.
- I/we independently researched and created this exhibit.
- This is an original entry made for this year's contest.
- I/we have not used any improper assistance.
- I/we understand using someone else's work without proper credit is plagiarism and will result in disqualification.
- I/we did not use AI to help us create our project.
- Project includes a properly formatted title page.
- Process paper is no more than 500 words.
- Project includes a properly formatted annotated bibliography.

Exhibit Rules

- My/our exhibit is an original creation, showing my/our historical research, analysis, and argument in a three-dimensional format.
- My/our exhibit meets the size requirements: no more than 40 inches wide, 30 inches deep, and six feet high—or—if the exhibit is circular or rotating, it is no more than 30 inches in diameter.
- My/our exhibit contains 500 or fewer student-composed words. The word count includes all text that I/we have written, such as titles, subtitles, captions, graphs, timelines, media devices, or supplemental materials. The word count for the exhibit appears on my title page.
- My/our historical argument is expressed primarily through the exhibit itself. Any supplementary materials or media devices are used sparingly to support my/our argument, if used at all, but are not the primary tools to deliver the project's message.
- I/we understand that my/our own historical analysis is the most important element of the exhibit. Quotes from primary and secondary sources support, but do not overwhelm or distract from, my/our historical argument.
- My/our exhibit does not include take away items for judges or others.
- Media devices or electronics (if used in the exhibit) meet the following requirements:
 - ▶ The media runs for no more than a total of two minutes and does not loop continuously.
 - ▶ The media does not include dramatic or narrative student involvement.
 - ▶ Judges are able to control the media device with clearly visible and accessible on/off and volume controls
 - ▶ The media device fits within the size and word limits of the exhibit.
 - ▶ The media does not link externally.
- I/we provide source credits for all quotes and visual sources used as evidence on the exhibit itself. All sources are cited in the annotated bibliography.

WHAT TO INCLUDE: PAPER

NHD papers are original pieces of writing showing historical research, analysis, and argument. When creating a paper make sure that:

- ▶ there are between 1,500 and 2,500 words.
- ▶ your text is free of grammatical errors and appropriate to the topic.
- ▶ all quotes and paraphrased information are correctly cited in MLA or Chicago style format (be consistent).
- ▶ your analysis is clear and balanced between your own words and evidence you introduce. Make sure your argument comes across, not just the words of others.

Things to consider when writing your paper:

- ▶ state your perspective in your introduction; this is your thesis. Use your conclusion to show lasting impact.
- ▶ have a clear argument.
- ▶ be succinct in your writing and use quotes sparingly to support your argument. The quotes should not be making the argument for you.
- ▶ everything you state as fact should be backed up with evidence.
- ▶ connect each piece of evidence to your original point.

You’ “building an argument,” so refer to points you’ve already made to highlight their importance.

Notes:

New York City History Day regional contest will be hybrid in 2026. The paper category will be submitted and judged virtually. Projects must be submitted in full by 10 pm on Wednesday, February 4. The State and National contest will be held fully in person.

Further History Day rules and guidelines can be found online at nhd.org/en/contest/contest-rules/



PROJECT CHECKLIST: PAPER

General Rules

- Topic clearly relates to annual theme.
- I independently researched and created this paper.
- This is an original entry made for this year's contest.
- I have not used any improper assistance.
- I understand using someone else's work without proper credit is plagiarism and will result in disqualification.
- I did not use AI to help us create our project.
- Project includes a properly formatted title page.
- Process paper is no more than 500 words.
- Project includes a properly formatted annotated bibliography.

Paper Rules

- I did not work with a group to write or research my paper.
- My paper is an original creation, showing my historical analysis, and argument in a written format.
- My paper is grammatically correct.
- The paper is between 1,500 and 2,500 words and includes:
 - ▶ Text that I have writing within the paper itself (not including the bibliography, process paper and title page).
 - ▶ Captions or words in footnotes/endnotes other than the citation.
 - ▶ Quotations from primary and secondary sources.
- The word count for my historical paper appears on my title page.
- If I have included any images, maps, graphs, or primary source materials in an appendix (this is not required), they are directly referenced in the text of the paper and cited in the annotated bibliography. Appendices are limited.
- I have chosen a method of citation (footnotes, endnotes, or internal citations) and I have credited quotes and the sources of idea or information throughout my paper consistently in either Chicago or MLA style.
- My paper is formatted to fit 8.5 x 11-inch paper with 1-inch margins on all sides.
- My paper is doubled-spaced and uses a 12-point classic serifed font (such as Times New Roman, Georgia, or Garamond).
- Pages are numbered
- Submitted online as a PDF.

WHAT TO INCLUDE:

PERFORMANCE

NHD performances are original 10-minute scripted dramatic productions, presented live based on historical research and analysis. When creating a performance make sure that:

- ▶ the plot, script, characters and action of your performance advance your historical argument.
- ▶ your speech is clear, expressive, and paced so the audience can understand you.
- ▶ the performance is no more than 10 minutes.
- ▶ all props and media devices are student operated.

Things to consider when creating your performance:

- ▶ create clear, vibrant characters whom the audience will easily recognize.
- ▶ your point of view doesn't need to be that of your character, but it should be clear to the audience.
- ▶ make direct connections to the theme. Don't make the audience guess.
- ▶ you're telling a story, so have a beginning, middle, and end.
- ▶ find ways to include primary source research into your script.
- ▶ move around the stage and use your space.
- ▶ all sets and props must be set-up, and taken down, only by the performer. Outside help is not allowed.

Notes:

New York City History Day regional contest will be hybrid in 2026. The Performance category will be judged in person on Sunday, March 1, 2026 at Brooklyn Public Library's Central Library at Grand Army Plaza. However, students must still register and submit written materials and a process video of their performance online by 10 pm on Wednesday, February 4.

Further History Day rules and guidelines can be found online at nhd.org/en/contest/contest-rules/



PROJECT CHECKLIST: PERFORMANCE

General Rules

- Topic clearly relates to annual theme.
- I/we independently researched and created this performance.
- This is an original entry made for this year's contest.
- I/we have not used any improper assistance.
- I/we understand using someone else's work without proper credit is plagiarism and will result in disqualification.
- I/we did not use AI to help us create our project.
- Project includes a properly formatted title page.
- Process paper is no more than 500 words.
- Project includes a properly formatted annotated bibliography.

Performance Rules

- My/our performance is an original, dramatic production presented live, scripted based on my/our research and analysis.
- My/our performance is less than ten minutes from start to finish.
- I/we can set up the performance in five minutes or less.
- I/we will be able to remove our props and participate in an interview with judges within five minutes following the performance.
- I/we understand that projectors, mp3 players, or media devices are allowed in a performance, but I/we have to operate these devices during the performance. Only participants in the performance may be involved in the production of any media.
- I/we understand that we do not submit a copy of the script to the contest.
- I/we understand that interaction with judges and audience members during the performance is prohibited.
- I/we are responsible for gathering costumes and props for the performance.

WHAT TO INCLUDE: WEBSITE

NHD websites communicate a historical argument and research using NHD WebCentral design software to create a multi-page layout. When creating a website make sure that:

- ▶ there are no more than 1,200 student-composed words.
- ▶ your text is free of grammatical errors and appropriate to the topic.
- ▶ any visuals and media are connected to the topic and enhance the argument.
- ▶ visuals and quotes are credited on the website.
- ▶ the organization is clear and help guide the viewer through your argument.
- ▶ all colors and fonts are legible and match the tone of your topic.
- ▶ your analysis is clear and balanced between your own words and evidence you introduce. Make sure your point and your argument come across, not just the words of others.
- ▶ any included media is under three minutes total.
- ▶ There are no links to external content.

Things to consider when creating your website:

- ▶ state your perspective in your introduction; this is your thesis. Use your conclusion to show lasting impact.
- ▶ make connections between pages and always connect back to your argument.
- ▶ be succinct in your writing and use quotes sparingly to support your argument. The quotes should not be making the argument for you.
- ▶ everything you state as fact should be backed up with evidence.
- ▶ embed video and images to help tell your narrative.
- ▶ use colors to set the tone.

Notes:

New York City History Day regional contest will be hybrid in 2026. The website category will be submitted and judged virtually. Projects must be submitted in full by 10 pm on Wednesday, February 4.. The State and National contest will be held fully in person.

Further History Day rules and guidelines can be found online at nhd.org/en/contest/contest-rules/



PROJECT CHECKLIST: WEBSITE

General Rules

- Topic clearly relates to annual theme.
- I/we independently researched and created this website.
- This is an original entry made for this year's contest.
- I/we have not used any improper assistance.
- I/we understand using someone else's work without proper credit is plagiarism and will result in disqualification.
- I/we did not use AI to help us create our project.
- Process paper is no more than 500 words and is integrated into the website in a PDF format.
- Project includes a properly formatted annotated bibliography integrated into the website in a PDF format.

Website Rules

- My/our website is an original production, reflecting my/our ability to use website design software and technology to communicate a historical argument.
- This project contains no more than 1,200 visible words. The word count includes all text that I/we have written in the website (not the bibliography or process paper). The word count appears on the home page.
- I/we have access to the internet, as well as the equipment needed to create a NHD website.
- My/our website is constructed using the NHD WebCentral editor.
- I/we have provided brief source credits for all materials (pictures, primary sources, multimedia) where they are placed in the website and provided full citations for all sources in the annotated bibliography.
- I/we operated all software and equipment used in the development of the website.
- All pages connect by clicking links. I/we have checked all of the links to make sure that they work.
- My/our website contains no materials created by non-participants specifically for this project.
- I/we have no more than three minutes of multimedia (music, audio, video) in the entire website, including any music that plays when a page loads.
- The website contains no spoken narration or explanatory materials by participants. It may contain recorded quotes or primary materials.
- If the website includes multimedia that requires software to view (e.g., Flash, QuickTime, RealPlayer), I/we provide a link on the same page to an internet site where the software is available as a free, secure, and legal download.
- All images, primary sources, multimedia, etc. are integrated into the website. There are no external links, except to the software plug-ins described above.
- I/we understand that extensive supplementary materials are inappropriate.

- The content and appearance of my/our webpages does not change. I/we have not used random text or image generators.
- I/we know the website can be viewed on multiple browsers (Firefox, Google Chrome, etc..)
- My/our website contains a home page with all the following elements listed:
 - ▶ Title of website
 - ▶ My/our name(s)
 - ▶ Junior or Senior division
 - ▶ Individual or Group website
 - ▶ Number of visible, student-composed words in the website
 - ▶ Total length of any multimedia
 - ▶ Number of words in the process paper
 - ▶ A navigational menu to access the other parts of the website
 - ▶ **do not** include the name of your teacher or school.

CITATION

Be sure students understand the purpose of a citation. A citation is a note to let the audience know where you got your information from. Citing is important for many reasons. Plagiarism is when you do not cite your sources and are stealing someone else's work and ideas. To avoid plagiarizing you need to give credit to the source of the information. You must cite direct quotes, but also ideas and information. It is also important to cite your work so that other researchers can look at the same sources you did and check to see if they agree with your opinions, or maybe find out more information that is interesting to them.

NHD allows MLA or Chicago style citation. We recommend MLA and this guide will mainly focus on MLA. Teachers and students can choose either one, but be consistent!



Students must also cite the sources quoted or directly referenced or paraphrase in their project. Image or videos also need to be cited next to their use. The NHD Bibliography guide will help understand how to cite sources depending on the category of project. bklynlib.org/annotated-bibliography



Note: MLA uses in-text or parenthetical citations, and Chicago uses footnotes. The NHD guide describes footnotes for use in a paper. If you choose to use MLA and want to use in text citation the standard is (Author Last Name – if it was not used in the paragraph, page number). Easy Bib has a helpful page describing different options for in-text citations: bklynlib.org/in-text-citations

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Every project will need to have an annotated bibliography as part of their required written materials. This will list every source you quoted, referenced, or used to guide your project.

ALL sources must be cited in the Annotated Bibliography. Each source should be accompanied by a two or three-sentence annotation explaining how the student used the source and how the source helped them to understand the topic. Annotations should not include a description or any quotes.

For either style, the section will start with “Annotated Bibliography” centered at the top of the first page. DO NOT label this section as Bibliography, Works Cited, etc.

For NHD, the citations must be divided into TWO sections: primary sources and secondary sources. Within those two sections sources should be organized alphabetically. DO NOT sort sources any other way (for example, do not create sections for newspapers, photos, and interviews. All these sources should be included together likely under the “primary source” section.)

Words like “a,” “an,” or “the” (these are called *articles*) are not included when considering how to alphabetize a source. However, in MLA and Chicago, they are still included in the text.

Citations are formatted with a “Hanging indent.” This is the inverse of a usual paragraph with the first line of the paragraph lining up with the margin and all additional lines indented.

For MLA, the citation should begin all the way to the left of the page. Any additional lines of the citation should be indented 0.5 inches from the left margin. The annotation should start on a new line and the whole annotation should be indented 1 inch from the left margin.

To create a hanging indent in Microsoft word, highlight the text of the citation. Click the arrow in the bottom right of the *Paragraph* tab of the *Home* section to get to *Paragraph Settings*. Under the *Special* dropdown menu in the *Indentation* section select “Hanging” and set it to 0.5 inches (0.5”). You can also use the keyboard shortcut **Ctrl + T**. The annotation can be formatted by highlighting the text and going to *Paragraph Settings* and keeping *Special* as “none” and selection 1 inch (1.0”) for the left indentation.

Chicago will be cited similarly with the citation beginning all the way to the left of the page. Any additional lines of the citation should be indented 0.5 inches (0.5”) from the left margin. The annotation should be on a new line and also indented 0.5 inches (0.5”) from the left. When formatting the annotation, be sure to keep left indent at 0.5 inches (0.5”) and *Special* at “none.”

To create a Hanging Indent in Google Docs, you will want to make sure the ruler is visible (Click *View* and check *Show Ruler*). Select the citation or annotation. On the ruler drag the light blue triangle (left indent marker) to the right until it is half an inch from the margin. Move **ONLY** the light blue rectangle back to the left margin. You can also change the margins with the ruler in Microsoft Word.

Depending on the kind of source, the citation will look slightly different. However, a general rule of thumb you will want to have the following elements:

- ▶ Author
- ▶ Title of source
- ▶ Title of container (the website, encyclopedia, organization it came from, etc.)
- ▶ Publisher
- ▶ Publication date
- ▶ Publication location

BASIC MLA CITATION FORMATS

BOOKS

Author's last name, First name. *Book Title*. Publisher, Year published

Book Chapter, Article, Section (incl. anthologies & compilations)

Author last name, First name. "Title of Chapter." *Book Title*, edited by Editor name, publisher, year, page number(s) OR DOI/permalink/URL when applicable (without http:// or https://)

Chapter or Article in an edited book found online or in database

Author last name, First name. "Title of Chapter." *Book Title*, edited by Editor name, publisher, publication date, page number(s). Name of database, URL or DOI. Access date (supplimental).

Chapter in an Encyclopedia

Author last name, First name (if available). "Title of Chapter." *Encyclopedia Name*, publisher, publication date, page number(s) OR DOI/permalink/URL when applicable (without http:// or https://). Access date (supplimental).

Book found on a website or in a database

Author last name, First name. *Book Title*. publisher, year published. Title of website or database, URL.

eBook

Author last name, First name. *Title of the eBook*, E-book ed., Publisher, Year published. Name of e-reader device.

Entry in a Dictionary

"Title of Entry." *Dictionary Title*, edition (if applicable), Publisher, Date published, page number or URL.

Translated or Edited Book

Author's Last name, First name. *Title of the Book*. Translated by OR Edited by First name Last name, Publisher, Year published.

WEBSITES

Author's last name, First name. "Title of Article or Individual Page." *Title of Website*, Name of publisher, date of publication in day month year format, URL.

Website with no author

"Title of Web page." *Website Title*, Publisher, date published in day month year format, URL.

Website without a formal title

Description of web page. *Website Title*, Publisher, day published in day month year format, URL.

ART & IMAGES

Digital image on a web page or online article

Image creator's last name, First name. "Image Title." *Website Name*, day month year published, URL.

Photograph/image from a book

Image creator's last name, First name. *Image Title*. Year created. *Book Title*, by Book Author's first last name, Publisher, year published, p. page(s).

Photograph/image from a database

Image creator's last name, First name. *Image Title*. Year created. *Database Name*, Numbers (if applicable), URL.

Photograph/image from a museum or institution, viewed online

Image creator's last name, First name. *Image Title*. Year created. Website Name, Numbers (if applicable), URL.

Photograph/image from a museum or institution, viewed in-person

Image creator's last name, First name. *Image Title*. Year created. Museum or institution name, Location.

Photograph you took ("Personal Collection")

Your last name, First name. *Image Description or image title*. Day Month Year taken. Author's personal collection.

JOURNALS, MAGAZINES AND NEWSPAPERS

Journal article from database

Author last name, First name. "Article Title." *Journal Name*, vol. #, issue #, publication date, page number(s). *Database Title*, DOI (if available) or URL (without http:// or https://) or Permalink. Access Date (supplimental).

Journal article with no known author

"Article Title." *Journal Name*, vol. #, issue #, publication date, page number(s). *Database Title*, DOI (if available) or URL (without http:// or https://) or Permalink. Access Date (supplimental).

Magazine article online

Author last name, First name. "Article Title." *Magazine Title*, day month year published, URL.

Magazine article in print

Author last name, First name. "Article Title." *Magazine Title*, vol #, No. (issue number), date published, page number(s).

Newspaper article found in a database

Author last name, First name. "Article Title." *Newspaper Title* [City], Day month year published, section name (if applicable), p. page number. Database name, URL. Accessed day month year.

Newspaper article online

Author last name, First name. "Article Title." *Newspaper Title* [City], Day month year published, URL. Accessed day month year.

Newspaper article in print

Author last name, First name. "Article Title." *Newspaper Title* [City], section name (if applicable), p. page number.

Journal article, online (not from a database)

Author last name, First name. "Article Title." *Journal Title*, vol #, issue #, publication date, page number(s). Website Name, URL. Accessed day month year (supplimental).

Journal article, in-print

Author last name, First name. "Article Title." *Journal Title*, vol #, issue #, publication date, page number(s).

INTERVIEWS

Interview in Print

Interviewee Last name, First name. "Interview Title." Interview by First name Last name. *Magazine Name*, Date Month Year, pp. page number(s). (or website if applicable)

Personal Interview (An Interview You Conducted)

Interviewee Last name, First name. Type of Interview (Personal Interview, Phone Interview, Skype Interview, etc.). Date.

AUDIO RECORDINGS

Musical Recording (album)

Group name or Performer's Last name, First name. *Album Title*. Edition (if applicable), Publisher, Year of publication.

Musical Recording (online song)

Group name or Performer's Last name, First name. "Song Title." *Album Title*. Edition (if applicable), Publisher, Year of publication. URL or App Name.

Musical Recording (song accessed on physical media)

"Song Title." *Album Title*, written/performed/conducted by First Last name, Edition (if applicable), Publisher, Year of publication. CD/MP3/MIDI/Cassette/Vinyl.

Podcast

Host's Last name, First name. "Episode Title." *Program Title*, Additional contributors (if applicable), Publisher, Date. Website where podcast was streamed, url (if applicable).

SOCIAL MEDIA

X (Twitter)

Account holder's last name, First name [username]. "Tweet message." X, date posted, URL.

Instagram

Account holder's last name, First name [username]. "Photo title" or description. *Instagram*, other contributors, date posted, URL.

Facebook

Account holder's last name, First name [username]. "Title or caption of post" or description. *Facebook*, date posted, URL.

YouTube

"Title of Video." YouTube, uploaded by Username, date posted, URL.

OTHER

Monument or memorial

Author's last name, First name. "Inscription Title" or description of inscription (if applicable). *Monument Title*, Year unveiled, City/State

Movie

Director's last name, First name. *Title*. Distributor/Studio, Year.

Television show

"Episode Title." Series Title. Contributor names (if applicable), Season #, Episode #, Network, date published/aired

OTHER NOTES

Two authors

1st last name, first name, and 2nd first name, last name.

Three or more authors

1st last name, first name, et al.

When to use italics

Titles and Containers should be italicized. A Container is where something is housed or located, ie: a museum would be the container for a painting, a collection would be the container for a poem.

Citation Format

Author's Last name, First name. "Title of Article or Individual Page."

Title of Website, Publisher name, Publication date in day month year format, URL.

Your annotation should be no more than three sentences. You should focus on how you used the source and how the source helped you to understand the topic. You do not need to include a description and you should not include any quotes.

WORKSHEET: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Source type: Primary Secondary

Title: _____

Author: _____

Publisher: _____ Date published: _____

Website: _____

Website accessed: _____

Source category: (this will help determine what additional information you need for the citation)

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Book | <input type="checkbox"/> Website | <input type="checkbox"/> Image |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper | <input type="checkbox"/> Journal | <input type="checkbox"/> Interview |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | | |

Write out your full source citation:

ANNOTATION

How did you use the source in your project? (one sentence) _____

How did the source help you understand you topic? (one sentence) _____

*Your History Day annotations should not exceed three sentences.
They should not be used to provide more information on your topic.*

PROCESS PAPER

Every NHD project must include a process paper. It can be no more than 500 words. The process paper cannot include quotes, images, or captions.

The process paper should be a description of the research and project development process. Students should touch on how they chose and developed their topic and the steps they took to find sources and create their project. Students should also use the process paper as an opportunity to explain the relationship between the topic and the annual theme, “Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History.”

NHD suggests touching on the following questions in your process paper:

1. How did you choose your topic and how does it relate to the annual theme?
2. How did you conduct your research?
3. How did you create your project?
4. What is your historical argument?
5. In what ways is your topic significant in history?

LAST STEPS EDITING AND REVISING

Use the category guidelines and rubrics to help with this step. Students and group can swap projects for peer-editing. What questions arise? Is there anything confusing? Keep an eye out for grammar and spelling mistakes. Encourage students to read their project out loud to help find mistakes in the writing. Encourage students to review their own projects looking for the following:

- ▶ Are you saying as much as possible in your own words?
- ▶ Where can you cut down on your word count?
- ▶ Do your claims and evidence really support your thesis?

Having an school contest is also a way to give students external feedback before they submit their project to the NYC contest.

SCHOOL CONTEST

1. Choose a date for the school contest, based on when projects will need to be submitted to the regional contest. NYC registration closes February 4, projects must be submitted by this date. We recommend holding the in-school contest no later than Wednesday, January 21, 2026.
2. Start to recruit judges early (parents, teachers, alumni, community members). You will need at least two, ideally three judges per category. If your school has projects from all the categories you will need between 18 and 27 judges.
3. Make sure you have spaces set aside for the contest in your school. A large space with tables to hold the exhibits, a quiet classroom with computers for websites and one for papers, a room with a video screen or projector for documentaries (make sure the sound is working), and a classroom or theater/auditorium for performances. Depending on how many projects you may need more than one room to divide individual and group.
4. It's a nice touch to provide students with award certificates. If you would like a template, or to arrange for certificates to come from the Center for Brooklyn History, please reach out to nychd@bklynlibrary.org before December 19, 2025.
5. Once you know how many students are presenting and in which categories, create a presentation schedule so students and judges know what to expect.
6. Print NHD judge ranking forms for each category (available in the appendix). These are the same ones used at all levels of the contest.
7. Make any edits or changes to the provided judge training slides (available on the google drive and flash drive).

The Minnesota Historical Society, host of Minnesota History Day Affiliate Contest, has a wonderful page on their website dedicated to helping teachers host school contests. For more resources including template letters for judges, “to do” lists, etc. visit: bklynlib.org/minn-school-contests



IMPORTANT REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Who must complete registration?

Teachers of competing students. Teachers must register prior to their students. More than one teacher per school can register, and up to two teachers can be listed as the advisor for each student. Registering will enable teachers to review student evaluations following the contest.

Competing students, accompanied by their parents or guardians. Students need the permission waivers signed by a parent or guardian to be fully registered. Each student in a group must register and be connected using the group project key for the entry to be evaluated.

Before you register, having the following information ready:

ALL REGISTRANTS: Phone number, mailing address, email.

STUDENTS ONLY: Parent/guardian name, email, phone number, teacher name and school, entry category, division, title of project (the title can be changed until the registration deadline), description of entry (description can be changed until the registration deadline)

When is registration?

Registration opens on January 5, 2026 for students and judges. Teacher pre-registration opens December 8, 2025. Registration closes and all projects must be submitted by February 4, 2026 at 10 pm. We highly recommend submitting by January 30 in case of technical issues.

Do I need to attend NYC History Day?

Students participating in Documentary, Exhibit, or Performance categories need to present their projects in-person on Sunday, March 1, 2026 at Brooklyn Public Library's Central Library at Grand Army Plaza. Teachers do not need to be present for their students to present. Paper and Website category projects will be judged remotely.

Why do you need parent/guardian information?

Parents/guardians must assist students in completing the account creation and registration process. This includes agreeing to several waivers and authorizations within the system. You must provide contact information for at least one parent/guardian during the registration process. Parents do not need to create their own account.

How do I register group projects?

If you're working on a group project, choose one person to register first. They'll create the entry and share the project key with everyone else. The project key will show up on the first student's registration confirmation screen and in their profile. Other group members use this key when creating their account—it links everyone together under the same project.

What email should I use?

We recommend using a personal email address as many school emails block outside messages. It is necessary for you to be able to receive email from Brooklyn Public Library and the zFairs registration system to compete in History Day. It is also vital that students provide their own email and provide an email for their parent/chaperone.

I can't log back into my account!

If you have trouble logging in and cannot reset your password, please contact nychd@bklynlibrary.org before creating a new profile.

TEACHER REGISTRATION

Creating a Teacher account:

You must register before your students.

1. Go to ny-nycrc.nhd.org
2. Enter your username, name and email; then click “*save and continue.*” You will complete the following pages in registration. Click “*save and continue*” after each section to move forward.
 - ▶ Personal information
 - ▶ Additional questions
 - ▶ Permissions and waivers
3. After filling out all the questions you will see a registration confirmation screen. Keep an eye out for a confirmation email from zFairs. If you don't see it in your inbox, check your spam folder. If you still have not received an email reach out to nychd@bklynlibrary.org, DO NOT CREATE ANOTHER ACCOUNT.
 - ▶ You can log back in any time before the deadline to edit any information.

NOTE: if you do not see your school listed, please reach out to nychd@bklynlibrary.org to have it added. In your email please include the following information to speed up the process: Your name and position at the school, school's official name, school address and phone number, name of principal or head of school, what grades does the school include, is the school public, charter, or private/ independent, does the school qualify for title I funding (if known)?

STUDENT REGISTRATION

Creating a Student account:

1. Go to ny-nycrc.nhd.org
2. Select “Create Account” from the navigation menu at the top of the page to open a drop-down menu. Select, “student.” You will be prompted to enter a username, full name, and email. You will continue to fill out your profile information by adding a password, parent/guardian name and information.

3. You will be prompted to select “Start a new entry” or “link to existing entry.” If you are the first student in a group to register, or you are registering for an individual project you will select, “start a new entry.” See below for more information about registering a group project.
4. Follow the registration steps to the “School” page and enter the information for your school, teacher, and grade. Your teacher must already be registered before you create your account.
5. On the “Entry” page you will enter the title, category, description of your project, and any relevant links. This information can be changed later if needed. You do not need to have your project completed by this step. If your project is a group project you will click “Will this be a Team Project” check box.
6. The final page of questions will be permissions that need to be gone over with your parent/guardian. Once you submit the permissions you will be registered. You can make changes to your project and registration by logging-in anytime before the February 4th registration deadline.

GROUP PROJECT REGISTRATION

If you are the first student to register a group project you will be given a project key and a group link. Write these down so that the other members in your group can link their accounts with yours.

If you are registering for a group project that has been started, you will follow the same instructions as above but select, “link to existing entry” at step three. Here you will enter the project key that the first student to register will have received.

Each student in a group project needs to create their own account and have their parent/guardian read over the permissions.

CATEGORY SUBMISSION

Project submission:

1. Go to the contest website and login to your student account. You will need the username and password you created when you registered. If you are participating as a group, only one group member needs to upload the project.
2. Click on your name on the top right—click **my profile**.
3. Upload your project files and/or paste your video/website link into the correct fields for your category.
4. Double check that your file and/or the link show up in the field
5. Click save at the bottom of the profile box.

Documentary & Performance:

1. In your registration profile, upload a single PDF with Written Materials. Your required written materials must be combined into a single PDF file with sections in the following order:
 - ▶ Title page
 - ▶ Process paper
 - ▶ Annotated bibliography
2. Upload an .MP4 video file of your documentary or performance to google drive, one drive, or dropbox. You can also upload your video to YouTube or Vimeo, but make sure it is only viewable to those who have a link. It should not be public. Sometimes a school's firewall prevents sharing with individuals outside your school. Test your link before submitting. If you need help sharing your video, email nychd@bklynlibrary.org *BEFORE* the contest deadline so we have enough time to assist you. This does not need to be the final version, just a draft.
3. Insert the link to your video to your registration profile.

Exhibit:

1. In your registration profile, upload a single PDF with Written Materials. Your required written materials must be combined into a single PDF file with sections in the following order:
 - ▶ Title page
 - ▶ Process paper
 - ▶ Annotated bibliography
2. Upload an .JPG, .PNG, or .PDF file with a photograph of your exhibit. If you need help, email nychd@bklynlibrary.org *BEFORE* the contest deadline so we have enough time to assist you. This does not need to be the final version, just proof-of-process.

Paper:

1. In your registration profile, upload a single PDF with Written Materials and paper. Your required written materials must be combined into a single PDF file with sections in the following order:
 - ▶ Title page
 - ▶ Process paper
 - ▶ Historical paper
 - ▶ Annotated bibliography

Website:

1. Insert your 8-digit NHDWebCentral Site Key and URL to the website to your registration profile.

For more category specific information, see the Submission Guidelines on the NYCHD website.

MORE RESOURCES

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Please reach out if you have any questions related to teaching NHD, creating and submitting projects, or field trips to the Center for Brooklyn History to help NHD students understand primary source research. Sonya Ochshorn—New York City History Day Coordinator nychd@bklynlibrary.org

REGISTRATION:

Registration opens for Teachers on Monday, December 8, 2025. General registration for Teachers, Students, and Judges will open Monday, January 8, 2026. Registration closes at 10 PM on Wednesday, February 4, 2026.

WEBSITES:

New York City History Day: Information and guides to entering the NYC Regional History Day Contest bklynlib.org/history-day

New York City History Day Registration: Website to register Teachers, Students, and Judges for the contest. This is also the portal that projects must be submitted. ny-nycrc.nhd.org

National History Day: Information on National History Day and resources for Students and Teachers on creating an NHD project. 1st and 2nd place winners from the NY State affiliate contest move on to the national History Day contest held between June 14—June 18, 2026 at the University of Maryland in College Park, MD. nhd.org

New York State History Day: Information on the New York State History Day contest. 1st and 2nd place winners from the NYC regional contest move on to the NYS affiliate contest held on April 26, 2026 at SUNY Oneonta in Oneonta, NY. nyshistoryday.com

NHD Theme Guide:

Understand the 2026 theme, “Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History.” Find a theme overview video, information book, graphic organizer, and topic inspiration. nhd.org/theme

NHD Contest Rules and Evaluation:

Learn about History Day rules and evaluation criteria with the NHD rule book and category evaluation forms. New York City follows the same rules as laid out by the National Contest. nhd.org/contest-rules

NHD WebCentral:

All website submissions must be created in NHDWebCentral. Google, weebly, or other website hosting platforms will not be accepted. website.nhd.org

New York City History Day is generously supported by the Rose M. Bradgeley Residuary Charitable Trust and the Morris and Alma Schapiro Fund.

EMILY WARREN ROEBLING

Emily Warren Roebling (born September 23, 1843, Cold Spring, New York, U.S.—died February 28, 1903, Trenton, New Jersey) was an American socialite, builder, and businesswoman who was largely responsible for guiding construction of the Brooklyn Bridge (1869–83) throughout the debilitating illness of its chief engineer, her husband, Washington Augustus Roebling; he had taken charge of the project after the death of the bridge’s principal designer, his father, John Augustus.

Emily Warren was born in upstate New York to a socially prominent family that traced its roots to the Mayflower. Her father, Sylvanus Warren, was a state assemblyman and town supervisor, and an older brother, Gouverneur K. Warren, was an 1850 graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, who became a corps commander in the Union army during the American Civil War. Emily was educated at a convent school in Washington, D.C. Late in the war she met Washington Roebling, at that time an engineering officer on her brother’s staff, and the two were married in 1865. One child, John Augustus Roebling II (1867–1932), was born of their union. In 1867–68 Emily accompanied her husband to Europe, where he went on his father’s orders to study the latest techniques of constructing foundations underwater by using sealed and pressurized caissons. In 1869, following the death of John Augustus from a freak accident, Washington assumed direction of the Brooklyn Bridge project, the longest-span suspension bridge in the world at that time and the first to be built with steel cables. As a result of prolonged exposure to pressurized conditions in the caissons at the bottom of the East River, Washington suffered severe attacks of decompression sickness. From 1872 he was essentially an invalid. Emily cared for him in their home in Trenton, New Jersey (where the Roebling family’s steel cable factory was located), and in a residence in Brooklyn Heights (from which Washington could observe the bridge work through a telescope). Emily served as Washington’s liaison with the engineering team, and over time she displayed

such proficiency in the issues of construction, materials, and cable fabrication that some observers concluded she had assumed the duties of chief engineer. In addition, she served as spokeswoman and advocate for her husband, reassuring officials that he was capable of managing the project. Just before the grand opening of the bridge in May 1883, she rode the first carriage across from the Brooklyn side, carrying a rooster as a symbol of victory. In a stirring dedication speech on opening day, the philanthropist, political reformer, and rival steelmaker Abram S. Hewitt declared that the new bridge would “ever be coupled” with the thought of Emily Warren Roebling.

After the building of the bridge, Emily passed the years 1884–88 in Troy, New York, while her son attended Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and she then supervised the construction of a new family mansion in Trenton, where her husband returned to the family business and pursued other interests as his health permitted. Emily thereafter became active in various social and philanthropic organizations, including the Daughters of the American Revolution. In 1899 she received a certificate in business law from the Woman’s Law Class at New York University (which at that time did not admit women into its law school). She traveled and lectured widely until her death.

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Portrait of Emily Warren Roebling, oil on canvas by Carolus-Duran, 1896; in the Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, New York.



CORNELL NOTES

Topic & source: _____

Key points & themes: _____

Notes: _____

Summary (2-3 sentences that summarize the key points and themes): _____

The Bridge a Monument of Womanly Devotion.

Not the least graceful of the many thoughts embodied in the able oration of Mr. Abram S. Hewitt at the opening of the bridge yesterday was that which referred to the custom of the ancient Greeks in dedicating to a goddess great public works like the Parthenon. "So with this bridge," he said, "will ever be coupled the thought of one through the subtle alembic of whose brain and by whose facile fingers communication was maintained between the directing power of its construction and the obedient agencies of its execution. It is thus an everlasting monument to the self-sacrificing devotion of woman, and of her capacity for that higher education from which she has been too long debarred. The name of Mrs. Emily Warren Roebling will thus be inseparably associated with all that is admirable in human nature, and with all that is wonderful in the constructive world of art." Among the many hundreds of thousands of people who have read or will read this tribute of esteem and regard there are very few, perhaps, who will quite understand and appreciate its significance without a word of explanation. The *EAGLE*, we are sure, will be acquitted of any desire to invade the privacy of Mr. Roebling's home in making the explanation. It is rather with a purpose to make known the facts that more than entitle the admirable lady to this world wide praise that we refer to the subject. The evil that men do occupies so vast an amount of public attention to the exclusion of the good that the record of Mrs. Roebling's devotion is a public benefaction. The *EAGLE*, therefore, without hesitation lets her light so shine before men that they may see her good works.

It is generally known that while John A. Roebling lost his life in the performance of his duty as engineer of the bridge, Colonel Washington A. Roebling, through his devotion to his work, became afflicted with that frightful disorder known as caisson disease. This disease manifests itself in various ways. In Colonel Roebling's case it affected his nervous system. He has been an invalid for years, suffering extreme torture at times, and has had the additional misery of preserving all his intellectual faculties almost preternaturally acute, while his physical condition has prevented his even leaving his bed. It is most gratifying to be able to state parenthetically that some of our most eminent physicians think he will eventually recover his health and strength. There were periods, however, during the construction of the bridge, when Mr. Roebling could not bear the presence of any person about him except that of his faithful wife. It was found that the nervous irritation and excitement produced by the visits of strangers gravely affected him. Yet it was manifest that, whereas Colonel Roebling alone understood the plan of the bridge, work upon it must cease unless some means of communication were found between the creative mind and the corps of constructors. Great emergencies are the opportunities of great minds. Mrs. Emily Warren Roebling met the difficulty as nobody else could. She addressed her remarkable intelligence to the acquisition of the higher mathematics; her luminous mind was well adapted to its profound and often desperate labyrinths. She mastered this most bewildering of sciences, applied it to the bridge, was *en rapport* with her husband and dazzled and astounded the engineers by her complete and intelligent conception of their chief's theories and plans. Day after day, when she could be spared from the sick room, in cold and wet the devoted wife exchanged the duties of chief nurse for those of chief engineer of the bridge, explaining knotty points, examining results for herself and thus she established the most perfect means of communication between the structure and its author. How well she discharged this self imposed duty the grand and beautiful causeway best tells. Knowing these facts the public can well echo Mr. Hewitt's sentiment that her name will ever be associated with all that is admirable in human nature and all that is wonderful in the constructive world of art.

It may be wondered why this charming bit of romance—an element one would scarcely expect to encounter in so material an undertaking—never before found its way into print. The answer is easy after a moment's thought. The true woman possesses, above all attributes, that loveliest and most womanly characteristic—modesty. Out of deference to Mrs. Roebling's aversion to posing in public and standing apart from her sex those who have long

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HOW TO DO IT: PRIMARY SOURCE PHOTO



Geller, Jules. How to do it. 1954. Brooklyn Daily Eagle photographs, Brooklyn Public Library, Center for Brooklyn History.
<https://www.bklynlibrary.org/digitalcollections/item/16c3d0db-45dl-48b0-a33b-d796c2f49534>

HISTORICAL QUALITY - 80%					
	EXEMPLARY	PROFICIENT	DEVELOPING	NOVICE	NOT EVIDENT
HISTORICAL ARGUMENT (THESIS OR CLAIM)	<input type="checkbox"/> Historical argument is consistently supported by analysis and evidence.	<input type="checkbox"/> Historical argument is mostly supported by analysis and evidence.	<input type="checkbox"/> Historical argument is somewhat supported by analysis and evidence.	<input type="checkbox"/> Historical argument is supported by minimal analysis or evidence.	<input type="checkbox"/>
THEME	<input type="checkbox"/> Annual theme is consistently clear and connected to the topic in the project and argument.	<input type="checkbox"/> Annual theme is mostly clear and connected to the topic in the project and argument.	<input type="checkbox"/> Annual theme is somewhat clear and connected to the topic in the project and argument.	<input type="checkbox"/> Annual theme has minimal clarity and the connection to the topic in the project and argument is unclear.	<input type="checkbox"/>
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PERFORMANCE

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HISTORICAL QUALITY - 80%

	EXEMPLARY	PROFICIENT	DEVELOPING	NOVICE	NOT EVIDENT
HISTORICAL ARGUMENT (THESIS OR CLAIM)	<input type="checkbox"/> Historical argument is consistently supported by analysis and evidence.	<input type="checkbox"/> Historical argument is mostly supported by analysis and evidence.	<input type="checkbox"/> Historical argument is somewhat supported by analysis and evidence.	<input type="checkbox"/> Historical argument is supported by minimal analysis or evidence.	<input type="checkbox"/>
THEME	<input type="checkbox"/> Annual theme is consistently clear and connected to the topic in the project and argument.	<input type="checkbox"/> Annual theme is mostly clear and connected to the topic in the project and argument.	<input type="checkbox"/> Annual theme is somewhat clear and connected to the topic in the project and argument.	<input type="checkbox"/> Annual theme has minimal clarity and the connection to the topic in the project and argument is unclear.	<input type="checkbox"/>
WIDE RESEARCH	<input type="checkbox"/> Bibliography includes an extensive variety of types of available sources.	<input type="checkbox"/> Bibliography includes a sufficient variety of types of available sources.	<input type="checkbox"/> Bibliography includes a moderate variety of types of available sources.	<input type="checkbox"/> Bibliography includes a limited variety of types of available sources.	<input type="checkbox"/>
PRIMARY SOURCES	<input type="checkbox"/> Primary sources consistently support the historical argument.	<input type="checkbox"/> Primary sources mostly support the historical argument.	<input type="checkbox"/> Primary sources somewhat support the historical argument.	<input type="checkbox"/> Primary sources are present but do not necessarily support the historical argument.	<input type="checkbox"/>
HISTORICAL CONTEXT	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevant connections to the topic's time and place are consistently made and analyzed.	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevant connections to the topic's time and place are mostly made and analyzed.	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevant connections to the topic's time and place are somewhat made and analyzed.	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevant connections to the topic's time and place are limited.	<input type="checkbox"/>
MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES	<input type="checkbox"/> Varied perspectives are consistently included throughout the project.	<input type="checkbox"/> Varied perspectives are mostly included throughout the project.	<input type="checkbox"/> Varied perspectives are somewhat included throughout the project.	<input type="checkbox"/> Varied perspectives are included in a limited way.	<input type="checkbox"/>
HISTORICAL ACCURACY	<input type="checkbox"/> Historical information is consistently accurate, credible, and without critical omissions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Historical information is mostly accurate, credible, and without critical omissions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Historical information is somewhat accurate, credible, and without critical omissions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Historical information has limited accuracy, credibility, or critical omissions that impede understanding.	<input type="checkbox"/>
SIGNIFICANCE IN HISTORY	<input type="checkbox"/> The impact of the topic is consistently analyzed in the conclusion.	<input type="checkbox"/> The impact of the topic is mostly analyzed in the conclusion.	<input type="checkbox"/> The impact of the topic is somewhat analyzed in the conclusion.	<input type="checkbox"/> The impact of the topic is mentioned.	<input type="checkbox"/>



CENTER
FOR
BROOKLYN
HISTORY

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