



WISCONSIN  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

## BEFORE JUDGING

- **Who will keep track of time?**
  - Documentaries + Performances = need time keeper
  - Website + Paper + Exhibit = optional; helps to keep interviews on time
- **Who will open the door and greet the students?**
  - Welcoming students into the room eases their anxiety

## JUDGING

- **Greet**
  - Welcome the student
  - Collect process paper + bibliography (minimum 1 per judge team)
    - Papers + Websites: should already be included in project
- **Read**
  - Process paper = the who/what/when/where/why of their project
  - Bibliography = VERY important; see what research they did
- **View**
  - Write brief notes (on scrap paper; record complete thoughts on comment sheets)
  - Documentary + Performance = signal to begin and time
- **Questions**
  - Do not ask about: schools, home town, or background
  - Start with “soft-pitch” question to ease nerves; go deeper if appear confident

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- **Primary Sources** (Things directly from the time of the event; a first-hand account)
  - Examples: laws/treaties, letters, newspapers, interviews, photos, or artifacts
- **Quality over Quantity** – Are there sources that could be added?
  - If the topic is MLK Jr. did the student include his speeches, the Civil Rights Act of 1968, newspapers, and interviews?
  - If the topic is Ancient Rome, the student may only have a few primary sources
- **Secondary Sources** (Anything not from that time; second-hand account)
  - Examples: biography, scholarly articles, books, and reliable websites
  - Not *just* websites, student clearly did some digging to learn more

## SAMPLE QUESTIONS

- **“Soft Pitch” Questions**
  - Why did you choose this topic?
  - How does your topic relate to this year’s theme?
  - What was your favorite source?
  - What did you learn in this process?
  - How did you find your images or resources?

- **Deeper Questions**
  - How did your thesis evolve?
  - Why does [topic] matter today?
  - What further research would you want to do?
  - If you advanced, would you change your project? How so?
  - Do you think this [event, decision, etc] could have been resolved another way? Was there a better option?

## CRITERIA

- **60% — Historical Quality**
  - Accuracy
  - Interpret and analyze
  - Place in historical context
  - Shows wide research
  - Strong thesis
  - Balanced—multiple viewpoints
  - Available primary sources used
- **20% — Relation to Theme**
  - Uses theme language
  - Demonstrate why topic is significant in history
- **20% — Clarity of Presentation**
  - Use of visual images
  - Process paper and bibliography clearly organized
  - Do NOT get swayed by the glitz and glamor
  - Do NOT judge based on quality of film software/props
- **0% — Quality of Interview**
  - Interview is meant for students to share more about their process/research
  - Projects stand alone; extra content can give a competitive advantage. They can share, but you can't judge what they say over what they completed.
  - Students are naturally nervous during the interview!

## AFTER JUDGING

- **Return** to the judges' room for food!
- **Review** projects to determine qualifiers; come to consensus together
- **Report** plagiarism or rule violations (note on comment sheets as well)
- **Record** feedback on comment sheets
  - Follow Compliment Sandwich Model: positive – area of improvement – positive
  - Mention ways to improve/flaws in a positive fashion
  - Avoid extreme '*superior*' and '*needs improvement*' marks unless unanimous

**REMEMBER, THEY ARE MORE NERVOUS THAN YOU!  
WHEN IN DOUBT—SMILE ☺**