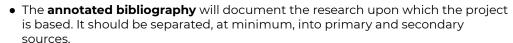## Research Paper Basics

Research Papers are most commonly the traditional format for presenting written historical arguments.

- **Between 1,500 and 2,500 total words.** About 10 double-spaced pages. Includes both student-composed and quoted material appearing in the text of the paper. Does not include footnotes/endnotes or appendix material.

- **Historical fiction and creative writing.** Students are permitted to submit historical fiction or creative writing in the Research Paper category. Projects in this format must still have an historical argument and research to support it.

- **Citations required.** Students should include either footnotes, endnotes, or in-text citations. It is more important that a student has these citations - than that they appear in a format that you, the judge, prefers.

- **Appendices optional.** Many students will choose to include additional support materials in an appendix. These materials should directly connect to the paper - and should not include extensive supplemental materials.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY AND PROCESS PAPER

In addition to the Research Paper itself, judges will review the following written documents as part of the evaluation of the research paper.

- The **annotated bibliography** will document the research upon which the project is based. It should be separated, at minimum, into primary and secondary sources.

- The **process paper** answers key questions about how the students researched and created the project.
    - How did you choose your topic and how does it relate to the annual theme?
    - How did you conduct your research?
    - How did you create your project?
    - What is your historical argument?
    - In what ways is your topic significant in history?

Virtual Contest Research Papers

Regional Contest	State Contest
ROUNDS OF PAPER JUDGING: You may be viewing projects in a first or semi-final rounds of competition. Through these rounds, judges will select the top 12 entries in both the Junior and Senior Divisions.	**TOP 12 PAPERS:** The entries State Contest judges are reviewing have advanced through a Regional level of competition, including first and semi-final rounds of consideration. The 12 entries in each division have been selected for the State Contest. One judge team will review all entries in either the Senior or Junior Division.
VIEWING PROJECTS: The links to papers are located in your ZFairs Judge Portal. Students uploaded their projects as one PDF file containing the Title Page, Research Paper, Process Paper and Annotated Bibliography. Most current web browsers have a built-in PDF reader.	**VIEWING PROJECTS:** The links to papers are located in your ZFairs Judge Portal. Students uploaded their projects as one PDF file containing the Title Page, Research Paper, Process Paper and Annotated Bibliography. Most current web browsers have a built-in PDF reader.
TOP ENTRIES: The number of entries your judge team needs to select will vay by round of competition and judge team. Follow the instructions provided by the contest coordinator to select the top entries for your round of competition	**TOP ENTRIES:** Your judge team will rank the top five entries. The top two are eligible to compete in the National Contest. All other unranked entries you review will receive Honorable Mention.

How does a rubric-based evaluation work?

Judges assess each project against the **evaluative criteria** (categories on the left) and specific standards for each **level of achievement** (check boxes across the page in the same row). For each evaluative criteria, select the level of achievement best describes the project you are viewing.

- A project's level of achievement will likely vary across different evaluative criteria. All check marks **do not need to be in the same column** down the entire page (e.g. all good, or all superior).

- Scoring a project against a rubric is different from selecting projects to advance in the competition.
  - **Scoring a Project:** How a project scores on the rubric is based on the strength of the specific project against the criteria. Do not adjust the ratings of a project to account for which projects are moving on in a contest.
  - **Selecting Winners:** The project(s) that advance should generally have higher ratings than those that do not. Determining the strongest projects can be more difficult when ratings are about the same and judges should include robust written feedback to help support their decisions..

Historical Quality - 80%

The majority of a judge's evaluation is based on historical quality and is consistent across project categories. This includes: historical argument, wide research, primary sources, historical context, multiple perspectives, historical accuracy, significance in history, and student voice. **Judges must review our general judge training, in addition to this category-specific document, for detailed information on the historical quality criteria**.

Research Paper Clarity of Presentation

Clarity of Presentation addresses how well the student used the category to present their ideas.

	SUPERIOR	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	NOT EVIDENT
WRITTEN MATERIAL	☐ Presents written material that is appropriate to the topic and easily understood ☐ Provides clear, concise, articulate text that does not contain grammatical or mechanical errors	☐ Presents written material that is appropriate to the topic and can be mostly understood ☐ Provides text that contains minor grammatical or mechanical errors	☐ Presents written material that is appropriate to the topic but is difficult to understand ☐ Provides text that contains several grammatical or mechanical errors	☐ Presents written material that is not appropriate to the topic or not understandable ☐ Provides text that contains major grammatical or mechanical errors that impede understanding	☐ ☐
TECHNICAL	☐ Contains citations in an NHD-approved format to consistently and correctly credit quotations and paraphrased information	☐ Contains citations in an NHD-approved format to credit quotations and paraphrased information	☐ Contains citations in some format to credit quotations and paraphrased information	☐ Does not include citations to credit quotations and paraphrased information	☐

Research Paper Rules Compliance

Major Rule Violations: Have the potential to give a project an unfair advantage over their competition. Major violations must be taken into consideration when deciding rankings. **Consult with History Day staff if your top entries have a major rule violation.**

- Missing bibliography
- More than 25 words over the total word limit, which includes all words in the body of the paper, both quoted and student-composed word limit

Minor Rule Violations: Note on the judge sheet, but should not be the focus of a judge's written commentary. Should not influence a project's ranking, unless projects are *exceptionally* close in quality.

- Missing process paper
- Incorrect citation format, missing annotations, or bibliography not sorted into primary/secondary sources
- Not including correct information on title page
- Fewer than 1,500 words
- Improper formatting of appendix and/or paper