The goal of History Day is to provide young learners with a positive experience, regardless of whether they win. We want all students to have a positive discussion of their scholarship with the judges and get meaningful written feedback.

As a judge, you are the face of History Day for our participants today. It is important that the interview and judging be fair and consistent. History Day is likely the most difficult project a student has completed. Converse with students in a way that allows them to feel proud of the work they have done.

Final Checklist for Judging a History Day Entry:

- Does this student’s work demonstrate historical research and scholarship?
- Does the student make a strong argument, connected to the annual theme? Remember: Student views may differ from your own.
- Does the student use the project to support and prove their argument?
- Is this student communicating their ideas in an organized and effective way?
TIPS FOR HISTORY DAY JUDGES

JUDGING RATINGS
History Day evaluates entries in relative terms of “Superior,” “Excellent,” “Good,” or “Needs Improvement.” There are no points assigned to the evaluation columns. Each entry is ranked in relation to the other entries you see in your judging pool today. You should not compare these projects against projects you may have seen at other History Day competitions.

THE INTERVIEW
At the end of each presentation you will have the opportunity to ask students questions about their entries. Students are excited about the opportunity to talk with you, but may be extremely nervous. Give them time to respond. Do not assume that a pause before responding means a lack of knowledge. Make sure you ask them at least three to five questions. Try to ask all groups a similar amount of time worth of questions.

Appropriate Questions:
- What was a helpful source?
- How does this topic fit the theme?
- What was a challenging part of your History Day experience?
- Is there anything you would like to tell us that we haven’t asked about?

Inappropriate Questions:
- Where do you go to school?
- How much money did you spend developing your project?
- Is this topic in line with your own religious/cultural beliefs?

Rephrasing Questions:
Many students, and especially those with English as a second language, may ask their judges to repeat or clarify a question. Instead of repeating the question verbatim, try rephrasing it or breaking apart a multi-part question.

Oral Critiques and Judge Feedback
The interview is the student’s chance to show off their knowledge and experience. Participants will explain and clarify their work. While we respect the content knowledge of our judges, the interview is NOT an oral project critique or a time to share your insights on the topic.

WRITTEN COMMENTS
The key to History Day judging is to provide positive, but critical, evaluations of each entry. Begin your comments with the most positive feature of the entry. Critical comments are best phrased as suggestions (e.g. “You may want to...,” “Did you consider...,” or “Other issues important to this topic are...”).

Constructive commentary is valuable for the students:
- Students who are advancing want to know how they can improve their work
- Students who are NOT advancing want to understand why their project was not selected

You do not need to make detailed comments on your judging form during the interview itself. Make enough notes about the strengths and weaknesses of an entry to allow you to write meaningful comments later.

PHOTO DISCLAIMER: By participating in this event, you consent to having your image recorded for informational or publicity purposes. If, however, you object to having your image recorded for any such potential use, you must affirmatively inform the organizers, who will make every effort to honor your wishes.