

OHIO HISTORY DAY

Planning your Performance

Writing a script is the first step in creating a performance. It will guide how you structure your acting, props, and costumes. Below are some tips for beginning to write your script.

- **Research first:** Like every History Day project, a good performance is based on solid research. Find the quotes, speeches, characters etc. that you want to include and build your performance around these.
- **Remember your historical argument (thesis statement):** Your historical argument, or thesis statement, is one of the most important factors in how your project will be judged. Make sure it is clear to those watching your performance. It is often a good idea to work your thesis into both the beginning and end of your performance.
- **Use historical evidence:** Make sure the evidence you found while doing your research is used throughout your performance. A good way of doing this is by using quotes and excerpts from speeches, letters, newspapers, and other primary sources.
- **Make it dramatic:** Historical quality is the most important part of any History Day project, but make sure you do not simply report facts or give a book report on your topic. A good performance should have interesting characters, settings, and storylines.
- **Don't overdo props or costumes:** Make sure any props or costumes you use support your historical argument or strengthens your performance. Too many props or costumes can distract from your project.
- **Remember the time limit:** A script for a 7-minute performance will usually be 3-4 pages long.
- **Practice, practice, practice:** You won't use your scripts on stage, so make sure to practice your performance.



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DRAFTING YOUR SCRIPT

When writing a script, it can be helpful to break it down into smaller parts. Use the table below to plan out your performance. The times given for each section are simply guidelines.

Part of Performance	Key Questions
Intro (1 minute)	Who are you? _____ When is this taking place? _____ Where are you? _____ What is your historical argument (thesis)? _____
Historical Context/ Background (1 minute)	What happened before your topic to influence it? _____ _____ _____ Were there other movements, people, or ideas that influenced it? _____ _____ _____ What events led up to the topic? _____ _____ _____
Heart of Story (2 minutes)	What are the key events and issues related to your topic? _____ _____ _____ _____
Short and Long-term Impacts (2 minutes)	What happened right away because of your topic? _____ _____ _____ _____ What has been the long-term importance of your topic in history? _____ _____ _____ _____
Conclusion/ Wrap-up (1 minute)	How will your performance end (remember to return to your historical argument/ thesis)? _____ _____ _____ _____

SCENE BRAINSTORM

Brainstorm at least two different scenarios using different characters in each. Which one is the best approach for presenting your ideas?

Scene 1

Character(s) (historical figures, composite characters, narrators):

Setting:

Timeframe:

Describe what happens in the scene:

Scene 2

Character(s) (historical figures, composite characters, narrators):

Setting:

Timeframe:

Describe what happens in the scene: