

Judging Tips for National History Day in Indiana:

Thank you for being part of National History Day! Judging is a rewarding opportunity, but if this is your first time we understand it can be a bit intimidating. Just remember your job today is to help calm the students' nerves, ask questions, and write helpful comments. Here are some tips to help you through the day:

Before the interview –

- Get organized. You will need a pen, evaluation forms and clipboard.
 - If you need to review the rulebook or theme sheet, pick one of these up from the registration table. Documentary and performance judging groups will need at least one stopwatch. Make sure to put your judging sheets in order of judging time. One person will need to keep track of time, and one person will need to hold on to the ranking sheet, which you will need in the judges' room.

During the interview –

- Make sure to introduce yourself to the students, and shake hands.
- The students have worked hard on their projects and are probably nervous. Speak to them pleasantly, and help calm their nerves.
- Ask questions related to their project. Sample questions may include: What made you choose this topic? Did you learn anything you didn't expect to learn? What was your favorite source and why? If a certain part of their project interests you, make sure to ask them about it.
- Try to write comments to help you remember things as you go along. If you wait until after all the interviews, you may forget a good comment or two. Writing key words will allow you to stay on time and fill in the rest of your ideas later.
- Make sure to take a copy of the process paper and annotated bibliography – it may help make a decision in the judges' room!
- Stay on time. It's important that you have the most time possible to discuss and evaluate the projects in the judges' room. If you get a break, take that time to write comments for the projects you have reviewed.

In the judges' room –

- Finish your ranking sheet first! This allows us time to prepare for the second round of judging. Let staff know if you need help ranking or when you are finished.
- Write helpful comments. Using constructive criticism will allow the students to work on their project between levels of competition for those moving on, and give those not progressing things to think about for the next year.
- Make sure to try to fill up the judges' sheet. Don't forget to list both strengths and areas for improvement. In most cases, the students want your feedback and use it to edit their projects.
- Enjoy lunch! If you are able to stay for a second round of judging, check in with staff and wait for your assignment.