



Contest Rule Book
Released: June 22, 2020

Summary of Significant Rules Changes

National History Day has revised the *Contest Rule Book*, effective with the beginning of the 2020-2021 contest year. Changes to the rules impact student participation at each level of the competition. While the NHD contest is not focused solely on rules, the *Contest Rule Book* sets forth the foundation for the entire program and establishes a consistent and fair footing for the contest cycle, from school level to the National Contest. NHD strongly recommends that teachers review the entire *Contest Rule Book*, available at nhd.org, and share it with students.

There are many changes; this summary explains the most significant changes and clarifications. *Italicized red text indicates new language*. Refer to the *Contest Rule Book* for exact wording, full explanations, and examples of these changes. Contact your [Affiliate Contest Coordinator](#) with any questions.

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

Evaluation Form (p. 13)

The evaluation form has been changed substantially. It is now a rubric with two evaluative sections: *Historical Quality (80%) and Clarity of Presentation (20%)*. The new evaluation forms for each category are available at nhd.org/categories.

Rule 8 | English and Translations (p. 16)

Added: *All entries for competition must be submitted in English unless otherwise approved by your Contest Coordinator. Other languages may be used, if translations in English are provided. When considering translated text for the purposes of word count, judges will count only the English translation.*

Rule 13 | Prohibited Materials (p. 17)

Added: *Toy and replica weapons* are now prohibited from NHD competitions, as well as *anything that could cause damage to the competition venue*.

Rule 15 | Written Materials (p. 18)

Modified: Process papers are now required in all categories, *including papers*.

Rule 17 | Title Page (pp. 18-19)

Added: Because the paper category now requires a process paper, the title page for papers must list the *number of words in the process paper*, in addition to the number of words in the paper itself.

Rule 18 | Process Paper (p. 19)

Modified: The questions to be addressed in the process paper have been updated, including a requirement to provide your *historical argument*.

Added: *Your process paper must not include quotes, images, or captions.*

Rule 19 | Annotated Bibliography (pp. 19-20)

Modified: You must list *all sources that you consulted* during the development of your entry.

Added: *Each annotation must be no more than two or three sentences.*

PAPER RULE CHANGES

- **Paper Word Count** (A2, p. 23) – *Captions* and *words in footnotes/endnotes other than the citation* now count toward the paper word limit, in addition to student-composed words and quoted material.
- **Process Paper** (A4, p. 23) – *A process paper is now required for papers.* The Title Page must list both the *process paper word count* as well as the word count for the paper itself (See Rule 17, pp. 18-19).

PERFORMANCE RULE CHANGES

- **Interaction** (B5, p. 26) – During your performance *you may not interact with or require participation by the audience.*

EXHIBIT RULE CHANGES

- **Exhibit Media Time Limit** (D4, p. 31) – If used, media devices or electronics in an exhibit must not run for more than a total of *two minutes* and must not loop.
- **No Links to External Content** (D4, p. 31) – *Links to external content, such as QR codes, are prohibited.*

WEBSITE RULE CHANGES

- **NHD Website Editor** (E2, p. 33) – Although the content of this rule is the same, the platform for building an NHD website has changed. *NHDWebCentral™* is the only option to build an NHD website.
- **Home Page Requirements** (E4, p. 34) – In addition to the previous requirements, the home page must now include the *total length of multimedia and the total number of all visible student-composed words.*
- **Website Media Time Limit** (E5, p. 34) – The website may contain multimedia clips that total *no more than three minutes.* The time limit includes both audio and video clips (including music).
- **Avoid External Hyperlinks** (E6, p. 35) – To comply with the rule prohibiting links to external content (E5), you must *remove the hyperlink from all URLs* listed in on-screen source credits. The only external links allowed are those that direct the viewer to an internet site where they can download a free, secure, and legal download of software needed to view the site (e.g., Flash, QuickTime, and RealPlayer).
- **Required Written Materials** (E7, p. 35) – Your annotated bibliography and process paper must appear on the site in *PDF format.*

SIGNIFICANT CLARIFICATIONS

Submission Requirements (All Categories)

Modified: Due to the diverse needs and logistics of regional and affiliate competitions, submission requirements vary for required written materials. Paper students are generally required to submit several copies of the title page, process paper, paper, and annotated bibliography prior to the competition by the registration deadline. Most competitions still require exhibit, documentary, and performance students to bring multiple copies of the title page, process paper, and annotated bibliography to the competition. However, rules may vary by region or affiliate. Please consult your Contest Coordinator for submission requirements in your area. You may wish to bring an extra copy of your written materials to the competition just in case.

Preparing Your Entry (pp. 7-13)

Expanded: This section offers more detail about the characteristics of good NHD topics and lays out expanded definitions of key NHD concepts. You will notice greater detail about using primary and secondary sources in the *Research* section.

Interviewing Historians (p. 10)

Emphasis Added: The language discouraging students from interviewing historians has been strengthened. Oral history interviews, on the other hand, are encouraged.

Student Voice, Academic Integrity, and Rules Compliance (p. 12)

Emphasis Added: This new section highlights the importance of students using their own words to analyze their research and draw original conclusions. This section also clarifies the distinction between less serious rule infractions, which may factor into the judges' final rankings but would not eliminate an entry, and more serious misconduct that would be grounds for disqualification.

Word Count Clarification (p. 21)

Modified: The table showing how to count words in NHD projects has been updated to show specific examples.

Rule 3 | Individual or Group Entries (p. 14)

Added: *Changing categories or topics is not permitted after entering the first level of NHD competition beyond the school.* Narrowing and refining topics is permitted and encouraged.

Rule 5 | Plagiarism (p. 15)

Clarification: Although NHD's policies regarding plagiarism have not changed substantively, the text of this rule has been updated, including the addition of specific examples of plagiarism.

Rule 10 | Reasonable Help (p. 16)

Modified: Now a separate rule, *Reasonable Help* provides multiple examples that distinguish between reasonable help and tasks that you must complete on your own.

Performance and Documentary Rule Clarifications

- **Time Requirements** (B2, p. 25, and C2, p. 27) – The five minutes following the performance includes both removal of props *and the interview*.