



National History Day in Kentucky Judging Policy **For Students, Teachers, and Parents**

Every effort is made to ensure that judging of the National History Day in Kentucky (NHDKy) competition is fair and accurate at all levels. We understand the time and hard work put into each project and while not placing can be disappointing, we do everything possible to fully prepare judges to provide a quality judging experience for students. NHDKy is dedicated to providing students and judges of all abilities with a quality experience. Please contact your State Coordinator with any questions, concerns, or requests prior to your contest date.

Please carefully read the information below to inform yourself about National History Day in Kentucky's policy regarding judging. We also suggest that you familiarize yourself with the judging information found in the [NHD Rule Book](#).

The NHD Interview

REMEMBER: The interview is **NOT** an evaluated component of the NHD process, but it is required at all levels of competition unless otherwise stated by the National History Day in Kentucky State Coordinator.

- The interview allows the judges to determine that the work was the students' own. This includes design and content.
- The interview allows the judges' an opportunity to understand a student or groups reasoning behind resource inclusion, ties to the theme, etc.
 - **For example**, it may be clear to the student why they chose a particular source or why they organized their content the way they did. But this may not be immediately clear to the judges. Judges are also pushing the students to become better at explaining their choices.
- The interview is a way for students to share what they have gained from the NHD experience with an audience outside their school and household.
- The interview is **NOT** a memorized and rehearsed presentation by the students to the judges.
- An NHD judge needs to be able to understand the project's argument, source choice, thesis, conclusion, and relation to the theme without the student's presence.
 - **REMEMBER:** Students do not interview again if they advance to finals at the State or National Contest, so their work must stand on its own.

Helping Students Prepare for the NHD Interview

- NHDKy recommends using the provided potential interview questions to prepare for the interview process.
 - **NOTE:** These suggested questions are available to judges and can help students prepare for the interview; **HOWEVER, judges may ask different questions based on the topic, project type and the student answers.** Please notify the State Coordinator with any questions or requests prior to your contest date.
- Consider mock judging at your school, either as part of a school contest or as a classroom activity.
- Interviews at contests are roughly 5-10 minutes in length.



Notifying NHDKy Staff during a Contest

*Below are situations that you should notify NHD staff about **during** a contest. Staff will determine the best course of action regarding the situation.*

Immediately Notify NHDKy Staff If:

- A judge does the following:
 - Asks a personal question of a student (i.e. Where are you from? What school do you go to?).
 - Bans spectators from the performance, website or documentary rooms.
 - Indicates that they know the student in any way (i.e. they know their parents, are a relative, a former teacher, etc.).
 - Expresses a value statement about a project during the interview process (For example: This is a terrible topic and you should never have done it. Or, I think this project is going to win at nationals.).
- Equipment problems occur during judging.
 - Students are encouraged to test their documentaries, websites, and any tech related to performances on a variety of devices and platforms prior to their competition. Students are also encouraged to bring their own device; however, in order to provide an equitable experience to all students most rooms will be equipped with technology.
 - If the issue is not resolved within five minutes, then the affected project will be pulled aside to allow the judges and other projects to continue on schedule. This will allow staff and the student(s) time to resolve the technical issue and they will be judged at the end of the judging period for that contest. **This will not affect their evaluation.**
 - **If the issue cannot be resolved and the project is unable to be viewed during the contest, the project is ineligible for advancement.**

Reporting Comments and Concerns after a Contest

Kentucky Historical Society staff, the NHDKy state coordinator, nor any official at the NHD national office has the authority to overrule, set aside, or otherwise undermine a judge's decision, and under no circumstances will a judge's decision be changed after a contest.

All judging is final.

- If you have specific concerns about the process as you observed it please follow the below procedure:
 - **Submit concerns in writing to:**
 - National History Day in Kentucky, 100 W. Broadway, Frankfort, KY 40601
 - Or to the NHDKy State Coordinator (kentucky@nhd.org)
 - Please submit concerns **3-10** days following a contest.
 - Any response will be made in writing. No comment shall be made by telephone or through personal contact unless the state coordinator deems it necessary, in which case they will initiate or invite the contact.
 - Comments and concerns will be taken into account for the next competition cycle and used to improve the judging experience where necessary.



Spectator Basics

What you should know about the judges:

- Only judges are privy to all bibliographies and process papers.
- Judges receive the same instructions at all levels of competition and receive training before interviewing students.
- Judges have suggested questions to ask students, but **may** ask questions not on that list. They may also ask different questions for each project.
- Judges have **absolute** authority to remove disruptive individuals from the judging room and to bar spectators entirely, if they deem it necessary to protect the integrity of the judging process.

What you should know about spectating:

- **The public is only allowed to observe judging for documentary, website, and performance projects. Only enter before or after a project is judged, never during.**
- TURN OFF ALL CELL PHONES while viewing **any** student projects.
- Refrain from cheering during documentaries and performances. Brief applause at the end is acceptable.
- Please remember to keep voices down while in the judging areas, including hallways.
- While documentary and performance judging is in process, stay in your seats and do not interject with your opinions.
- Audience members may not take photos or video of contestants or judges without prior permission.