

Virginia History Day: Contest Policies



Virginia History Day is organized by the

**VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF
HISTORY & CULTURE**

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Photography and Videography Guidelines

These guidelines apply to Virginia History Day Regional/District contests and the Virginia History Day contest.

The goal of all History Day contests is to recognize student achievement and ensure fair judging. At no point should photography and/or videography interrupt or influence contest judging.

Official Event Photography/Videography

Official photographers/videographers will be identified either through a Virginia History Day lanyard or staff/mentor attire. These photographers/videographers will capture many elements of the event, which may include registration, student presentations, and awards.

Spectator Photography/Videography

Photography and videography by attendees and their teachers/families is permitted at the event. All spectator photography/videography must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Photography/Videography During Student Presentations: Spectator photographers and videographers must get the prior consent of the student participant(s) before photographing or video-recording student presentations.
- Photography/Videography During Student Interviews: Spectator photographers and videographers must get the prior consent of both the student participant(s) and judges before photographing or video-recording interviews.

Media Release

As part of the registration process for Regional/District and State contests, all participants will be asked to agree to the following: “I give the Virginia Museum of History & Culture, Virginia History Day, and National History Day, Inc. and its partners the unlimited right to use the voice and/or image of me or my child/legal ward, for publicity, and/or in documentaries, or other education materials and media.”

Do Not Photograph Requests

”Do Not Photograph” requests must be made in writing to the event coordinator at least one week in advance of the event. We will do our best to ensure that official event photographers do not photograph your student, but cannot eliminate the risk from event attendees and spectators.

Special Awards Sponsorship and Judging Guidelines

These guidelines apply to Virginia History Day Regional/District contests and the Virginia History Day contest.

What are Special Awards?

Special Awards are additional awards recognizing outstanding student work at Virginia History Day. The prizes recognize entries that fall under a specific content focus (e.g. women's history, labor history, etc.) or students who did something specific in creating their entry (e.g. such as using a particular library). In addition to recognition, award winners receive a monetary prize determined by the prize sponsors (often ranging from \$50 to \$500 per entry). Prize Sponsors determine the total number of awards.

Who sponsors Special Awards?

Individuals and organizations sponsor prizes. They work with the VHD staff to determine the specific criteria and prize focus.

Who Judges Special Awards?

VHD staff will designate a panel of independent judges to evaluate Special Award nominated projects. Generally, Special Award sponsors are not included on this panel.

How are Special Awards judged?

Special Awards are evaluated separately from, but at the same time as, the regular State VHD competition. A project's ranking in the competition does not impact any Special Awards that may be awarded.

1. **NOMINATION:** Students nominate their entries for Special Awards during the State VHD registration process. Students must submit any materials the prize sponsors require. Incomplete nominations cannot be considered for prizes.
2. **SCHEDULES:** Nominating an entry does not guarantee that a project will be reviewed by Special Award judges. VHD staff review nominations to create a judging schedule. Not all projects nominated for a prize will be reviewed by the Special Awards judges. Special Award judge schedules are not posted or shared with student competitors.
3. **JUDGING:** Special Award judges will watch Documentaries and Performances as they are presented. Special Award judges will view Exhibits, Papers, and Websites without students present. There are no interviews for Special Awards.

4. **SELECTING WINNERS:** Special Award judges select prize winners according to the award criteria and historical quality. Prize winners are announced at the awards ceremony and posted online with contest results.
5. **REDEEMING AWARDS:** Prize winners will receive additional information on how to receive the award. In general, students will submit financial paperwork (W9) for the individual student or group leader. Award checks are processed by the Virginia Museum of History & Culture or sponsoring organization and mailed to the student.

Can my organization sponsor a Special Awards?

Our capacity to offer Special Awards depends on event capacity and prize focus.

- **Capacity:** Special Awards are currently offered primarily at the State VHD Contest. Any additional sponsor spots are made available at the discretion of the VHD staff.
- **Prize Focus:** VHD staff will work with organizations to determine the prize focus. In general, staff works to ensure limited overlap between awards and a broad enough focus to allow the prize to be competitive.

Contest Fees and Cancellation Guidelines

These guidelines apply to Virginia History Day Regional/District contests and the Virginia History Day contest.

2021 Fee Structure

- Regional Contest: Varies by region
- State Contest: \$25/student
 - Applies to all students registering for Virginia History Day.

Invoicing and Payment

After the registration deadline, participating schools will be invoiced for the total number of students registered for the event. Payments must be submitted online or to the Virginia Museum of History and Culture PO Box. We are unable to accept payments during the event itself.

Attn: Virginia History Day Staff
Virginia Museum of History & Culture
P.O. Box 7311,
Richmond, VA 23221-0311

- If the school is covering registration fees, the invoice will include information on how to pay via check or purchasing card.
- All members of a group must register, pay the entry fee, and be included in the online registration form even if they are unable to attend the contest. We are unable to waive fees for contests.

Cancellation and Refunds

- Before the Registration Deadline: If an entry drops out before the registration deadline, the school will not be invoiced for the entry.
- After the Registration Deadline: We are unable to refund registration fees after the deadline has passed.
- If a registered student cancels or does not attend the contest, the school/student is still responsible for the entry fee. If you have an extenuating circumstance, please contact the State Coordinator. Any changes to these guidelines will be made at the coordinator's discretion.

“Teachers Rule:” Guidelines on Teacher Discretion in Shaping a Classroom History Day Assignment

These guidelines apply to Virginia History Day Regional/District contests and the Virginia History Day contest.

- Within the structure of the National History Day Contest Rule Book, teachers have the ability to make important decisions to shape the implementation of the program within their own classroom.
- “Teachers Rule” is Virginia History Day’s philosophy to support the ability of teachers to make decisions about the following aspects of NHD in ways that are best suited to their curriculum and available resources:
 1. Individual/Group Size: Teachers may limit the option to work alone or in a group. While NHD permits groups of up to five students, teachers may limit the group size to less than five (but not more than five).
 2. Group Member Selection: Teachers may determine how student groups are formed. Teachers may require parental “sign-off” on group work.
 3. Topic Selection: Teachers may choose to limit student topic selection to a certain time period, geography, content area, etc. to better fit the content of the course in which NHD is being used. Teachers may create lists of topics that are not permitted in their class or require parental/ administrative “sign-off” on topics. Teachers may limit the number of duplicate topics within a contest year.
 4. Category Choice: Teachers may choose to limit the category options (Documentary, Exhibit, Paper, Performance, Website) available to students. Teachers may also choose to limit the number of projects in a certain category being created at the school.
 5. Advancing from School-Level Contests: It is up to the teacher or teachers at the school-level to determine which projects advance to the Regional/District level of competition. Teachers may ask students to volunteer, make these decisions on their own, host a competitive school event with volunteer judges, or a combination of the above to determine which entries advance.
- When possible, Virginia History Day encourages disputes between student participants, parents, and teachers to be resolved on the school-level. While we will not overturn school-level decisions on implementation-related decisions (such as those listed above), we can help provide clarification and discuss possible additional options.

Event Attendance Guidelines

These guidelines apply to Virginia History Day Regional/District contests and the Virginia History Day contest.

Whenever possible, we expect all students connected with an entry to attend the contest. We do recognize that there may be times when this is not possible. Students may still be able to enter the Regional/District or State contest, even if they may not be able to attend on the day of the contest. Student competitors should weigh these options against other obligations to determine if they wish to participate in the History Day contest.

Religious Conflicts

Students with religious conflicts for the day of the competition should contact the event coordinator to discuss options before the event registration deadline. Documentary, Exhibit, Paper (State), and Website students might be able to have an advanced interview. If the student wishes to attend the event, but cannot operate technology for religious reasons, a staff member is able to assist.

Group Entries

Documentary, Exhibit, and Website entries can be judged with only one group member present. There is no penalty for missing group members. All group members must register and pay any applicable fees.

Performance entries with missing group members cannot substitute in other students for missing group members. The script must be re-written for only the group members that are able to be present. A group Performance cannot switch to the Individual Performance category.

Phone Interviews

Phone interviews must be requested by the student and approved by the event coordinator in advance of the contest.

- For Documentaries and Exhibits, a teacher or classmate must set-up the project and supporting materials.
- For Documentaries, Exhibits, Papers, and Websites, a teacher or classmate must be present at the judging time with the student on the phone for the interview. Judges will not call the student on their personal phone.

Websites Entries

If the student(s) from a Website entry do not show up at the event and no prior phone interview has been requested or approved, the entry will be treated as a “no show.” The entry will not be

permitted to advance to the next level and the judges will not provide any written feedback for the students.

Major Event Conflicts

If another event conflicts with Regional, District, or State contests and has the possibility to significantly negatively impact History Day attendance, History Day staff reserve the right to arrange additional alternate options for students. These options will be designed to improve access to the event and will be applied consistently across all schools. Lead teachers will be informed of these additional options in advance and students should follow these additional guidelines.

Plagiarism Identification and Investigation Process Guidelines

These guidelines apply to Virginia History Day Regional/District contests and the Virginia History Day contest.

Rules and Definitions

The NHD Contest Rule Book, Section 5.1. Rule 5 states: “Plagiarizing all or part of your NHD project will result in disqualification. You must give credit to the primary and secondary sources you use and provide a complete citation and annotation for all of your sources in your annotated bibliography.”

- Rule 5 defines plagiarism as: “To steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one’s own; To use (another’s production) without crediting the source; To commit literary theft; To present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source”
- **Please Note: If a teacher knows that an entry is plagiarized, or suspects that a student has not created the project, they should not register it for a History Day contest.**

Process

History Day staff and judges start from the assumption that all work entered into a History Day competition is the work of the student. When plagiarism occurs, it is often unintentional on the part of the student, due to lack of experience with research and citation. When plagiarism is identified, Virginia History Day’s goal is to use this as a teachable moment, rather than to penalize or embarrass the student(s) and to focus on significant infractions, rather than clerical errors.

- **Identification in Advance of the Contest:** Websites and Papers are reviewed in advance of the Regional/District and State contests.
 - If a judge identifies plagiarism, they should contact the event coordinator and identify the plagiarized portion of the project as well as the original source material.
 - The event coordinator will review the project and affirm if there is plagiarism present.
 - If time permits, the event coordinator will notify the teacher and develop an action plan. Depending on the severity of the problem, a teacher may wish to:
 - Withdraw the student from competition. The contest fee will not be refunded. The event coordinator will make the determination if it is

logistically feasible for the school to replace the entry (Regional-level only).

- Have the student participate in the contest, but not be eligible to advance to the next level of competition. Judges will do their best to provide feedback on other elements of the project.
- History Day staff and/or the teacher may be called to participate in the interview, depending on the severity of the plagiarism.
- **Identification at the Contest:**
 - If a judge identifies plagiarism, they should contact the event coordinator. The judges should identify the plagiarized portion of the project as well as the original source material.
 - If possible, the event coordinator will discuss the issue with the teacher. The event coordinator will review the project and affirm if there is meaningful plagiarism present and the impact that will have on a project's ranking.
 - Projects with significant plagiarism are ineligible to advance to the next level of competition. Judges will do their best to provide feedback on other elements of the project.

Contest Advancement and Results Disputes Guidelines

These guidelines apply to Virginia History Day Regional/District contests and the Virginia History Day contest.

*******SUBJECT TO CHANGE IN 2021*******

Advancing from School-Level Contests

It is up to the school to determine which entries are eligible to advance to the next level of competition. Schools make these decisions in a variety of ways:

- A school-level contests can be held to determine which projects advance with judge feedback
- A school may hold a showcase event, which may or may not have judges present
- Teachers may decide which projects will advance to a Regional/District competition without a showcase or competition
- Students may decide they are interested in competing to fill the schools allotment of spots at the Regional contest

How many entries will advance?

At present, this policy is different for each region.

Please Note:

A student who participated in History Day at their school but did not advance may not register on their own for a Regional/District contest under the auspices of a different school or organization.

Students from schools that do not participate in History Day are allowed to compete at Regional contests.

Please contact the State History Day office for more information

Regional/District-Level Contests

At each contest, Regional History Day judges will select students for two types of awards:

- **State Qualifier:** State Qualifiers will receive a medal and are eligible to advance to State History Day.
- **Runner Up:** A runner up project will be selected and announced for each category. A certificate or medal may be given to runner up winners, as decided by each region.

How many entries will advance?

- Third place projects will serve as alternates and advance to the state contest if one of the top two projects is unable to. The top three projects in each category in the Elementary Division will advance to the state contest. Fourth place projects will serve as alternates and advance to the state contest if one of the top three projects is unable to.
- Judges will rank the top five entries in each category/division.
- The 1st and 2nd place projects at the state contest are eligible to advance to the National Contest. If a 1st or 2nd place entry is unable to attend the national contest, the spot will be offered to the 3rd place, then 4th place, then 5th place.

Please Note: History Day encourages judges to advance as many projects as possible to the next level of competition. If there are not enough entries or enough entries of sufficient quality in a particular category, judges may choose to advance fewer than the minimum number of entries per category/division or to award fewer Honorable Mentions.

Disputing Contest Results

According to the NHD Contest Rule Book Section 7.6. “Judges alone will determine each entry’s ranking and whether a project advances to the next level of competition. The decision of the judges is final. If you have a concern, ask your teacher about the correct process for contacting the Contest Coordinator.”

- While the decision of judges is final, Virginia History Day strives to find solutions to correct the inherent inequities of judging when this is possible. As you process the contest results, you must keep in mind that:
 - **Viewing is Not Judging:** The experience of judging is different from viewing projects. Judges have received training and are looking for projects to meet specific History Day criteria. Judges also have access to the annotated bibliography and are evaluating the quality of research for each project they view. Viewers often do not have access to this material.
 - **Subjectivity:** There is an inherently subjective element to History Day judging. Historians will often reach different opinions about the significance of the same data.
 - **The Overall Quality of All Projects is High:** Judges are often making ranking decisions about projects that are very similar in quality. At State History Day, First-Round judges must rank the top three entries, 1st - 3rd, and Final-Round judges must rank the top five entries, 1st-5th, with no ties. A ranking between 2nd and 3rd place may not mean a significant quality difference in the project. History Day judges are not permitted to rank two entries as a “tie” at State History Day.

During the Contest

Teachers, students, or spectators should alert History Day staff during the competition if they have a question or concern about judging. We are happy to explain the process that is going on behind the scenes. History Day staff have more options to address a problem during the contest, rather than after the awards ceremony has concluded. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Discussion between staff and judges or students
- Representation of the project (especially in the case of technical difficulties)
- Assistance with locating materials (such as a missing bibliography during the event)

After the Contest

Teachers and students should contact the event coordinator with any concerns via email. Please provide as much information as possible. Next steps may include, but are not limited to:

- Follow-up with additional information on the judging process
- A review of judge comment sheets or
- Staff review of the project to provide additional feedback

At no point in the dispute process will we remove another entry's status as a State Qualifier to "swap in" another entry. It is at the State Coordinator's sole discretion to allow an additional entry to advance from a Regional/District contest to State. Judge decisions at the State contest are final. No additional entries will be permitted to advance from State to the National Contest.

Conflict of Interest Guidelines

These guidelines apply to Virginia History Day Regional/District contests and the Virginia History Day contest.

What is a Conflict of Interest?

A conflict of interest may be defined as an interest (direct or indirect) between people that might affect, or might reasonably be thought by others to affect, the judging and/or outcome of an NHD contest.

- Virginia History Day will take all practical and necessary steps to mitigate any identified conflicts and ensure a fair competition.

Judge Conflict of Interest Procedures

The Virginia History Day program takes steps to identify and mitigate any possible conflicts of interest between participating students and contest judges.

- People affiliated with History Day students or schools are allowed to serve as judges.
 - Judges are asked to disclose any relationships with History Day students or schools when they register.
 - VHD staff will assign these judges to a different category/division from those students/schools with whom they are familiar.
- Judges review their schedule of entries before judging begins, but do not have access to school information. When conflicts are identified, event staff will switch judging assignments. It is not necessarily a conflict of interest for a judge to have previously evaluated a project as long as no additional consulting took place.
- Judges with conflicts will not be able to access results before they are announced to the general public.
- If a conflict doesn't become apparent until the interview, the judge will immediately notify the event coordinator. The judge will not evaluate and rank that entry.
- In order to minimize possible conscious or unconscious bias, no school will be included on the materials handed to judges or on the individual room schedules posted in competition areas. Judges are instructed to refrain from asking students about the school they attend. Students should also refrain from wearing clothing with school logos or including their school name when introducing their project.

Staff Conflict of Interest Procedures

By nature of the work that Virginia History Day does with schools, staff members and mentors will likely develop relationships with students and teachers participating in Regional/District and State contests. While it is impossible to avoid all conflicts, we will make all reasonable efforts to assign staff members/mentors with close student/teacher relationships to jobs outside of the judge room or processing of results.

Access to Results and Competition Areas

Staff will not give competing teachers or students access to results for their students in advance of when these materials are available to the general public.

- Staff will not allow competing teachers or students access to judge deliberation rooms while judges are discussing entries or ranking projects.
- Staff will not allow competing teachers, students, or judges access to tabulation areas while preparing results and will limit the number of people working on results to as few staff as possible.

Discussion and Evaluation of Entries

Staff may advise on the impact of a rule violation on a project ranking, but will not make decisions in regards to a project's ranking.

- When it becomes necessary for a staff member or mentor to judge at a contest, they must review the schedule for possible conflicts. It is permissible for staff or a mentor to judge students with whom they may have had singular interactions, such as providing advice at a research session or having spoken to the student's entire class during a presentation.

Spectator Expectations and Behavior Guidelines

These guidelines specifically apply to the state Virginia History Day contest. Regional/District contests may have different policies, but if no specific policy exists, then these will apply.

Spectator Expectations

Spectators must be respectful of student presenters, judges, and event staff. In general, spectators should avoid behavior that would compromise the quality of judging. Please note that spectators:

- Should not enter or exit a competition room while the presentation is taking place. When possible, please also try not to enter or exit during the interview portion, but it is permissible.
- May not question students during the interview period.
- Should minimize possible distractions to students and/or judges, such as cell phones or media.
- Should give ample physical space to judges for project review, questioning, and comment writing.
- Should follow all spectator photography and videography guidelines.
- Should not personally approach or question the judges about a project's ranking during or after the interview.

Viewing Student Presentations (State Contest Only)

There are opportunities to view most types of projects at a History Day competition. If a room is open to public viewing, student presenters are not able to request that judges or event staff remove spectators unless spectators are being disruptive. These policies are for the State Contest only. Regional contests may have their own policies.

Documentaries	Spectators may view Documentaries and interviews as they are presented according to the event schedule.
Exhibits	Spectators may view Exhibits while areas are open for public viewing. Interviews are not open to spectators. See event schedule for specific times.
Papers	Interviews are not open to spectators. Papers are displayed for public viewing.
Performances	Spectators may watch Performances and interviews as they are presented according to the event schedule.

Websites	Interviews are not open to spectators. Website URLs are available at the event for viewing on personal devices.
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Disruptive Spectator Behavior

Disruptive behavior has the potential to undermine the contest and impact the quality of the student and/or judging experience. This type of behavior may include, but is not limited to:

- Shouting, yelling, or speaking at a volume that distracts or impedes the student presentation or judge questioning, either within the presentation room or in areas adjacent to the presentation room
- Running, pushing, shoving, jumping, or any other potentially harmful behavior (to self or others)
- Use loud, abusive or otherwise harassing language. Harassment is unwelcome verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward a person based on race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, age, marital status, familial status, or status with regard to public assistance when such conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or disruptive environment.

Handling Disruptive Behavior

1. A judge or mentor may ask a spectator to stop a disruptive behavior if they feel it is impacting the quality of the student and/or judging experience.
2. A judge or mentor may ask the spectator to leave the area.
3. A VHD staff member may be called to assess the situation and may ask the spectator to leave the area.
4. If the behavior continues, the VHD staff member will determine if it is necessary to contact building security.

Judge Expectations Policy

These guidelines apply to Virginia History Day Regional/District contests and the Virginia History Day contest.

The Judge's Role

The History Day program, students, and teachers rely on judges as a critical part of the educational process. As a judge, you will:

- Sign up in advance on the website.
- Attend a judge orientation the day of the event.
- Work with a judge team of two or three to review projects and interview students.
- Select the strongest projects to advance to the next level of competition.
- Provide detailed written feedback about each project you view.

Expectations

A brief orientation at the start of the event will cover the fundamentals of judging as well as contest logistics.

- The following judge expectations may or may not be covered in detail, but include:
 - Event Attendance
 - Let us know as soon as possible if your schedule changes and you are unable to judge.
 - Arrive on time to all events for which you sign up and stay until the judging process is completed.
 - Attend the judge orientation at the start of the event.
 - Student Interactions
 - Pay careful attention so you can evaluate well. Students have worked for months on their projects and are looking forward to this opportunity to share their work. Judges should avoid distractions such as personal phone calls, texts, etc. during the event. Judges may not bring minor children that they need to supervise to the event.
 - Use a friendly tone of voice and positive language.
 - No one should be touched in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe. Watch for the student to initiate appropriate touch, which might include a handshake, high five, or fist bump.
 - If a student, fellow judge, or event spectator needs first aid, contact a staff person immediately.
 - Fairness and Respect
 - Alert VHD staff to any conflicts of interest, including students you know personally or schools with which you have close relationships.

- Set aside personal bias for or against topics. Judge each project based on the merits of the information that the student presents.
- Act in a manner that is appropriate and respectful. Remember the age of your audience. Some students are as young as the 4th grade and may be nervous to discuss their work. Ask questions which prompt students to provide information, and be patient if they are shy or anxious.
- You have a right to be respected. You do not have to suffer offensive language or hostile behavior from a student or a fellow judge.
- At no point will judges be expected to be alone with student participants.
 - Judges work in teams of two or three people.
 - Rooms are open to the public when judges are interacting with students.
 - Teachers, parents and/or guardians have the option to be in the room or in the vicinity during the judging interactions.

Unacceptable Judge Behavior

Virginia History Day’s highest priority is to run a fair contest that is educationally beneficial to the student participants. Judge behaviors that interfere with these goals will be investigated and may impact a person’s ability to judge at future contests. Behaviors may include, but are not limited to:

- Discrimination against a student, including on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, age, marital status, familial status, or status with regard to public assistance
- Excessive use of phone, text, supervision of children, etc. that distracts a volunteer from judging.
- Failure to provide written feedback to students through the NHD evaluation forms.
- Use of loud, abusive, or otherwise harassing language directed towards students, fellow judges, History Day staff members, or mentors.
- Departing in the middle of a presentation or from the event without completing results (unless for a medical or personal emergency).
- Repeated failure to follow contest procedures, such as ranking based on non-official History Day criteria, providing oral critiques during the interview, or showing unfair bias for or against certain topics.

Addressing Judge Behavior

Judges are volunteers who believe in the value and mission of our program. We assume that judges have the best intentions in all contest interactions. Our goal is to fairly investigate and counsel judges when behavior is deemed inappropriate. In the rare case that a judge behavior is

flagged by a staff member, mentor, student, teacher, or fellow judge, History Day staff will take the following steps:

1. Discuss the issue with relevant parties, which may include students, teachers, fellow judges, History Day staff and/or mentors.
2. Follow up with a judge. Record the issue in the judge's file for future reference.
3. Judges who have more than one incident may be required to meet with VHD staff before volunteering again.
4. Judges who have repeated incidents of unacceptable behavior, or a single incident of egregious unacceptable behavior, will be placed on a "Do Not Invite Back" list and not allowed to volunteer for Virginia History Day again. A judge will be notified of this decision via postal mail.

Please Note: VHD reserves the right to immediately remove a judge in cases of egregious and/or unacceptable behavior.