

LESSON: BUILD IT! UNDERSTANDING HISTORY DAY CATEGORY RULES AND SAMPLE PROJECTS

Essential Questions: 1. What do I need to know about the rules for my category? 2. What makes my category different from other categories? 3. How can I best use this category to present my ideas?

Objective: Students will take a closer look at the History Day *Contest Rule Book* as well as sample projects as they begin to create their own project.

Grade Level: 6 – 12

Time Needed: 50 minutes

Materials: *Contest Rule Book* (or copies of relevant pages), highlighters, sample projects (online examples or those collect by teacher from previous years), handouts for each category (listed below)

Procedure

1. Beyond the basic framework of word and time limits, there are additional rules that students need to be aware of for each History Day category.
2. Pass out copies of the relevant pages of the most recent History Day *Contest Rule Book*. This should include category specific rules as well as the general rules for all categories.
3. Ask students to highlight or take notes on the rules that related to their category. As a class, discuss any questions they might have about rules, especially in the website category where there are very technical rules about the project.
4. From these basic category rules, students can create a wide variety of types of projects that fit the criteria. Remind students that the goal is to create a project that best explains the HISTORY behind the project, including the argument and evidence.
5. Share sample projects with students and discuss the characteristics of successful projects in each category. Try sharing a sample website – such as the website that has been used for other lessons – and modeling this analysis as a class.
 - What do you like about this project?
 - What could be improved?
 - What makes this category unique?

- Do you think the author could have used the category more effectively? Could they have used more/less media? More/fewer words? More interactive?

6. If time and space permits, try dividing students into groups based on their category to look at sample projects.

7. As students begin to construct their projects, use the sample handouts for projects in each category to help them draft their ideas on paper before they begin putting projects together.

Title

BACKGROUND

Place your topic in Historical Context

What information do we need to know that is going to help understand your topic?

What outside circumstances are going to influence your topic that we need to know about?

BUILD—UP

Who are the main players and what are they doing to prepare for the main events of your topic?

Give more specific information related to your topic than "background" sections.

What are the events leading up to the main event?

What is life like before the main events of your topic?

SHORT TERM IMPACT

What are some of the immediate reactions to the main event shortly after it happened?

What changed? New laws? New way of thinking?

Who was affected by the event?

How is the world different after the main events of your topic? Examples?

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Why is this topic important in history?

What is the long term significance?

What were the intended/unintended consequences?

So what?

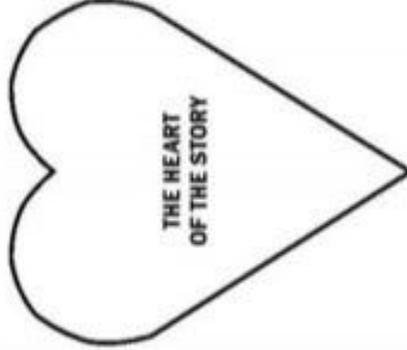
What do you want the reader to take away from your project?

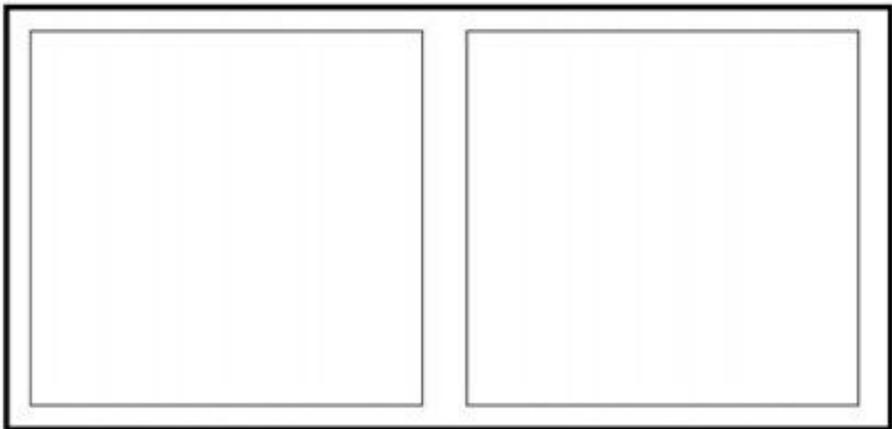
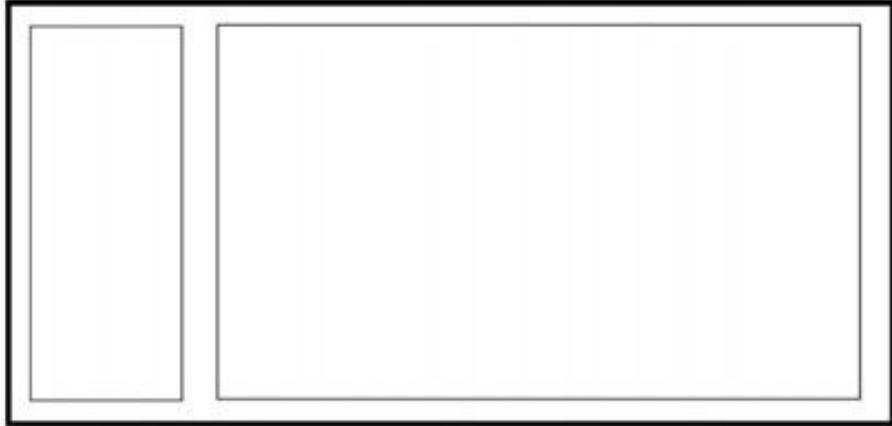
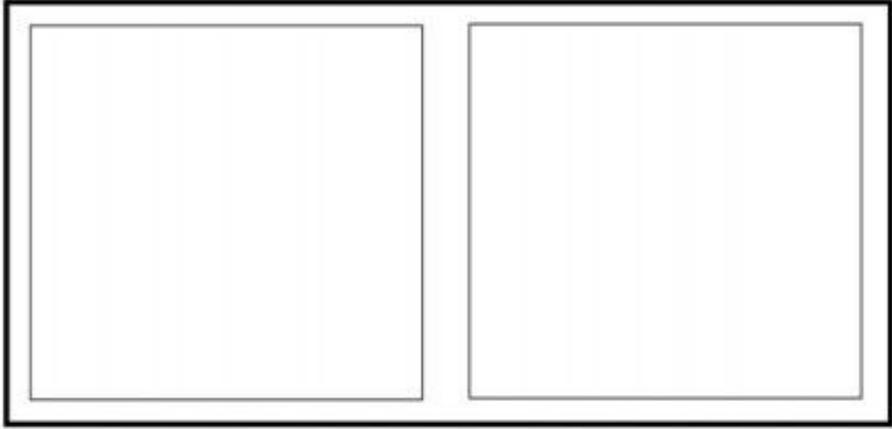
THESIS

MAIN EVENT

Major details about the main events in your topic.

THE HEART OF THE STORY





HANDOUT: ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE EXHIBIT

Orientation

Make sure the title and subtitle of the exhibit are prominent features of the design.

Make the main idea or thesis clear to the viewer.

Segmentation

Organize the exhibit into subtopics.

Use design elements to make subtopics clear to viewer.

Explanation

Use clear and concise captions and text to:

1. Identify pictures, objects, or documents.
2. Interpret Information for the viewer.

HANDOUT: LEVELS OF TEXT

Introduction to the use of labels on historical exhibits

A TOWN BUILT ON IRON

The main title introduces the topic and attracts viewer interest.

*“The Evolution of
Hibbing, Minnesota,
1880-1980”*

The subtitle focuses the topic and limits what the project will interpret.

Moving the Town

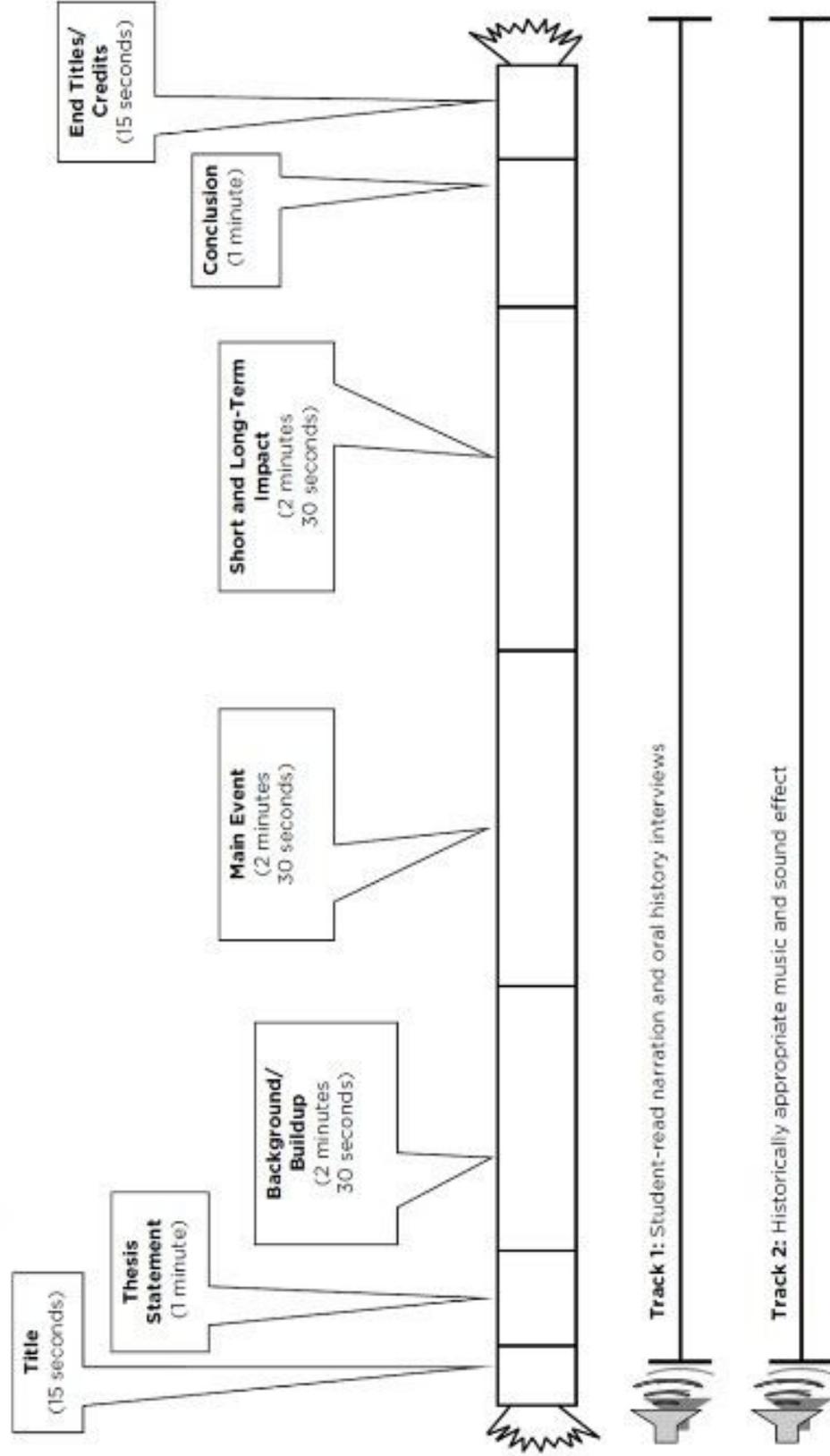
A subject label breaks down the topic into smaller parts for explanation and organization. These labels guide the viewer around the exhibit.

The original town site of Hibbing was located over a rich lode of iron ore.
Because the ore was more valuable than the town, the buildings of
Hibbing were moved to a new site in 1919.

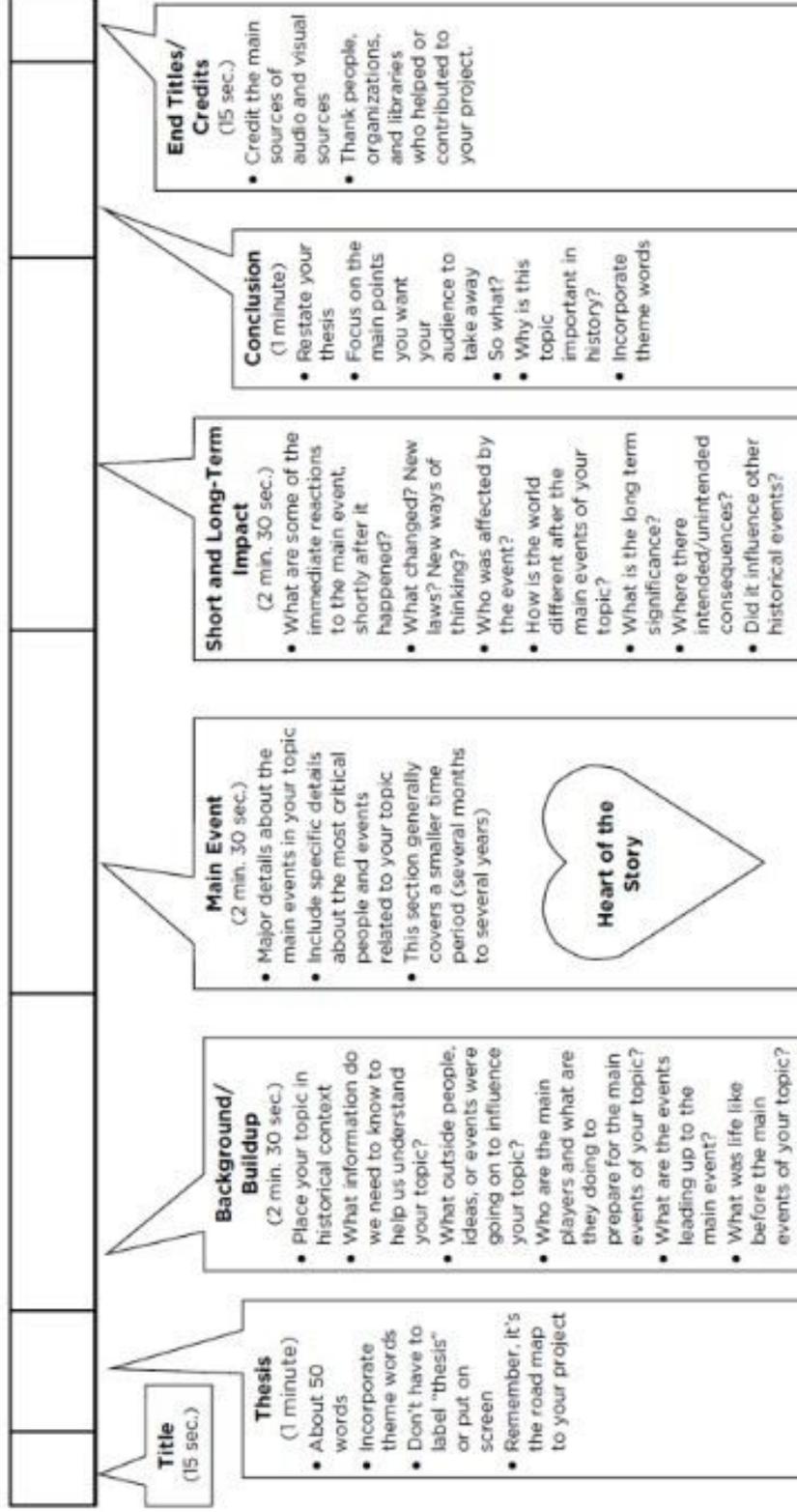
Captions are the most detailed label and provide the opportunity for interpretation. These should be short, active, and clear.

THE DOCUMENTARY ROLL

It's important to think about breaking up your documentary into smaller segments, just like an exhibit is divided into sections. It will be easier to organize your thoughts into these smaller parts. It's also easier for your viewers to follow along when you have a well-organized documentary. Here are some general ideas about how you may want to organize your documentary. **Remember:** These are just ideas. As long as your project is organized you can create it however you want!



THE DOCUMENTARY ROLL [®]



Track 1: Student-read narration and oral history interviews



Track 2: Historically appropriate music and sound effect

HANDOUT: ORGANIZING YOUR INFORMATION: DOCUMENTARIES

The most important element of a documentary is a great script. Remember that narration should always drive the visual images. In order to organize your documentary, consider the following:

Segment your information. You are telling a story, so you want to make sure that you have a clear and distinct parts:

- **Introduction:** Make sure people understand where and when this is happening and include your thesis
- **Background Information:** What will people need to understand your main argument and the importance of your topic?
- **Main Argument:** Fully explain your topic and argument.
- **Conclusion:** Address the impact your topic has had in history and sum up its importance.

Write your script first. Trying to put images together first often results in disaster and despair. If you know where you are going with your project, it is much easier to find images that fit your ideas than ideas to fit your images. Use a storyboard to add images that fit later on. It is likely that you will need about 100 images in total.

Example of a Storyboard

Script	Image
<p>During the Great Depression the Wagner Act created the National Labor Relations Board or NLRB, a federal agency. The goal of the Act was to allow workers greater rights, including the right to create labor unions.</p> <p>Many unions were soon formed and workers struck for better wages throughout the nation.</p> <p>However, the Act created controversy as some felt it worsened the Depression. It also created conflict between the two major union organizations.</p>	  

HANDOUT: 11 HELPFUL TIPS FOR MAKING A DOCUMENTARY

1. Always write the script before you start creating the documentary!
2. Make sure you have enough visuals for your documentary
 - a. You might need more than you'd think:
 - i. Documentary = 10mins = 600 seconds
 - ii. Avg. length of time each picture is on the screen = 5 seconds.
 - iii. $600/5= 120$ images!!
 1. Other types of visuals: Newspaper headlines, video clips, interview clips, maps, drawings, cartoons, documents, title screens, talking head, etc.
 - b. No fuzzy pictures. Period!
 - c. Places to go for visuals:
 - i. Scan from books
 - ii. Take digital photos of books/hard copy photos
 - iii. Google Images - Use medium or preferably large sized images only
 - iv. Take video from other documentaries (its okay, just don't take the narration!)
3. Do a storyboard so that you know you have the visuals to support your narration
 - a. Documentary-makers mantra: "Say cow, see cow!"
4. Record the narration before you insert the visuals
 - a. The story must drive the visuals, not the other way around
5. Chop up your script into small chunks (1 or 2 paragraphs) to be recorded separately. This makes it easy to edit if you make a mistake.
6. Use a decent microphone. The ones built into computers aren't very good.
 - a. Talk over your microphone so you don't get "popping" noises
 - b. Limit distracting background noises
7. Save your project frequently!

8. Make sure you have enough space (iMovie and Windows Movie Maker projects can take up several GB of space). If you need to transport the project from computer to computer, be sure you have an external hard drive.
9. Do an interview (or a couple!)
 - a. Interviews provide a validating outside opinion and add spice to the flow of the documentary
 - i. Good interview subjects:
 1. Eyewitnesses
 2. History professor
 3. Authors
 4. Newspaper reporters
 5. Elected officials
 6. Anyone else who can speak with a unique/authoritative voice on the subject
10. Don't try to cram too much into your project
 - a. Talking faster just makes it harder to understand your project
 - b. Leave enough time to utilize title screens and dramatic pauses for effect and to allow your points to sink in with the audience
 - c. Sacrifice interesting details so that you can include more historical context and analysis
11. Don't go crazy with the transitions
 - a. At some point, they just get annoying
 - b. Mix it up, use a variety of transitions, and concentrate on using the less noticeable ones
12. Listen to your project with a critical ear toward the audio
 - a. Make sure narration volume levels are consistent, especially from one speaker to the next
 - b. Add music to create flow and build intensity/emotion
 - i. Use instrumental music only, unless there is some lyrical music that relates to the topic and is used unobtrusively

- ii. Check www.freeplaymusic.com for copyright-clean, instrumental music that can be tailored to the length you want
 - iii. Classical music is also good
 - c. Balance music volume so that it is not competing with the narration
- 13. Add a brief credits screen to give credit for music, research archives, interview subjects and any “special thanks” you’d like to give
 - a. Credits do NOT need to be your complete bibliography. Credits will be much briefer, usually only listing major sources of information.
- 14. Make backup copies of your project and make sure it plays on a variety of formats and machines.
 - a. Check with your teacher or event coordinator to double-check what technology is going to be available at the competition.
 - b. History Day recommends that all students bring their documentaries as DVDs formatted to play on a standard, non-computer based DVD player (like the one attached to a TV set). Remember that this is different than saving your documentary on a DVD. When you format your documentary as a DVD, you should be able to play it on any DVD player.
 - c. Test your documentary on different DVD players, including those not attached to a computer.
 - d. If your project does NOT play on a standard DVD player, you may need to bring equipment with you to the competition.
 - e. You may also want to save your project to a flash drive (and be sure it plays on multiple computers) or upload it to the internet (YouTube, Vimeo, Google Drive, the Cloud, etc.) as another back up option.

HANDOUT: ORGANIZING YOUR INFORMATION: PERFORMANCES

- Writing a script is the essential 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.
- Quick Tips for Writing Scripts:
 - Identify the key information first. Find the quotes, speeches, characters etc. that you know you must include and work the performance around these.
 - Balance drama with historical evidence. Using quotes, speeches, or excerpts from sources like newspapers can be an excellent way to incorporate evidence and detail that a great performance requires.
 - Prepare a performance. Don't prepare an oral report that simply states facts. You need characters to come alive and interact with each other and the audience. Try to engage the audience by asking questions or creating dramatic scenes.
 - Choose the type of voice you want to use. You can use first person and third person perspectives to tell your story. In some cases you may want to use both to convey your points.
 - Choosing characters. Select characters that can tell the most in your story. Don't overcomplicate the storyline with too many.
 - Block. As you write your script, include the actions and placement of your characters.
 - Avoid clutter. Too many props, costumes, or characters will overwhelm your performance.
 - Length. Scripts are usually 4-5 pages.
 - Your research is still central. You want each piece to tie back to your main argument and thesis.
 - Practice, practice, practice. You **won't** use your scripts on stage, so make sure to practice your performance.

Name: _____

WORKSHEET: PLANNING YOUR PERFORMANCE

By their very nature, performances are the most creative History Day category. It's impossible to give you a formula for a successful performance. They can take many different formats and will vary based on the number of people, characters, scenarios, and topic. Below are two tools to help you begin brainstorming your performance. Keep in mind that these are not the only successful approaches to the performance category – just a place to get started. Be creative!

DRAFTING YOUR SCRIPT	
What	Key Questions and Elements
Intro (1 minute)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set the scene.• Who are you? When is this taking place? Where are you?• Introduce your thesis.
Historical Context/ Background (2 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 (3 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Key events and issues related to your topic.
Short and Long-term Impacts (3 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the immediate outcomes of your topic?• What has been the long-term significance of your topic in history?
Conclusion/ Wrap-up (1 minute)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reinforce your thesis.• Conclude your characters actions.

SCENARIO BRAINSTORM
Brainstorm at least two different scenarios using different characters in each. Which one is the best approach for presenting your ideas?
Scenario 1
Character(s) (historical figures, composite characters, narrators): _____
Setting: _____
Timeframe: _____
Describe Scenario: _____ _____ _____ _____
Scenario 2
Character(s) (historical figures, composite characters, narrators): _____
Setting: _____
Timeframe: _____
Describe Scenario: _____ _____ _____ _____

What Would Your Character Know?

When selecting characters for your performance, think about what they would or wouldn't know. If your character is Abraham Lincoln, it's impossible for him to know what happened in 1870 because he was assassinated in 1865. Sometimes selecting a different character – maybe someone who wasn't a major player – gives you the chance to take a step back and discuss your topic's significance in history in a different way. Instead of Abraham Lincoln, one of his advisors or aides who lived after his death would give you a more long-term perspective on Lincoln's presidency.

**SAMPLE: QUEEN OF THE REDS: THE REBELLION OF
EMMA GOLDMAN. 1996 HISTORY DAY, “TAKING A
STAND IN HISTORY”**

[Words in brackets]: Blocking on stage

Line between paragraphs: Denotes new section

(Setting: Barcelona hotel room, 1939)

No, no Mr. Newspaperman! I do not have time for you now. My train leaves Barcelona in [look at watch]... well, I suppose I have a few moments. Do you mind if I pack while I talk? All right then.

[Start unpacking drawers] So, you want to speak to the infamous Red Emma Goldman, do you? There is a lot for me to tell. I am a radical, and an anarchist – a person who believes in the absence of laws in society, in case you were not certain. And I am not ashamed of it! Everything I have ever done has been against the government and for anarchy. I reason, why should I, or anyone else, be forced to kneel before laws, when I could be free to love, to be creative, to be independent, if governed by my own self. It was by that that I lived and spoke, from the moment I escaped the dictatorship of my unloving parents in Russia, to the moment I am now speaking to you. [Find handkerchief while unpacking]

If you want a scrap of history from my life, this is one of the most important reminders. The tears I shed on Black Friday, November 11, 1887, still stain this handkerchief. I have left them there these 52 years to remind myself and others of the bravery of the men butchered that day, and of the legacy they left behind for me to carry out.

[Sit down] There were eight of them, anarchists all, who were speaking peacefully in Haymarket Square when a bomb was thrown, and of course the first people the government blamed were the anarchists. All they were trying to do was speak! Their constitutional right, or so it was supposed to be. But the government did not listen, and eventually four of them were hung on Black Friday. I cannot understand how the government can deny them this right they claim to grant to every American citizen, except for peaceful anarchists, I suppose.

[Stand up, pack handkerchief] So, an anarchist I became, devoted to eliminating the silencing laws. And I am still fighting. It is for anarchy that today I am going to Canada. I am going to raise money for some Italian anarchists. I cannot go to Italy because I was banned from there,

just as I was once banished and deported from the United States. They were always looking for a way to get me out of the county, so on December 22, 1919, they sent me and 248 other anarchists to Russia, to be rid of the only people who truly understood the atrocities of the government.

[Find articles in drawers, put on glasses] These are some articles that I saved that went out of their way to slay us; perhaps one of them is from your newspaper. The Cleveland Plain Dealer: “It is hoped, and expected, that many more vessels, larger, more commodious, carrying similar cargo, will follow in her wake.” The St. Paul Pioneer Press: “Banished Reds Curse America.” I did not curse America. In fact, I warned them of the inevitable turning of events.

[Put down cane, straighten up, take two steps forward, as if going back in time to a younger Emma] This government has signed its death warrant with these deportations. This is the beginning of the end of the United States government, but I will not stop my work as long as life rests with me. [Slouch, step back, pick up cane, go back to older Emma] That was a long time ago; twenty years only, but it seems more like a century. But I am off the subject and we have so little time. Now, everyone knows that the government is run by men, and oy, if I have not had problems with them both.

[Find picture of Johann Most] This is one of the most important men in my new life in America, Johann Most. Aye, he was a homely man, but a brilliant speaker who taught me to speak just like him to the very souls of my comrades.

[Pack picture of Johann] But one night, as I was giving a speech for Johann in Cleveland, urging the futility of the struggle for the eight-hour work day, an elderly man brought to my attention how useless my argument was. And I realized that I was nothing but a creation of Johann’s, speaking only what he told me to speak. I knew that if I were to be a true anarchist, I must speak with what came from my own heart. When I approached Johann about this, he flew into a rage and shouted at me, “Whoever is not with me is against me – I will not have it otherwise!” Now you would expect a tiny, 21-year- old girl to shrink back in fear and obedience. But you are speaking to Emma Goldman! And I told him I would not repeat his beliefs, I would not fall into the slavery of marriage, and I would not advocate violence as a method for reinforcing my beliefs. Ironically, the one time I was forced to use violence to reinforce my beliefs was against Johann. In front of a crowd Johann verbally attacked my dear friend Alexander Berkman, my own dear Sasha, for a crime that Sasha had committed in the name of anarchy.

And I, enraged that anyone should dare to slay Alexander's name, leapt onto that stage and attacked Johann with a horsewhip, and cracked it over my knee.

[Pretend to crack cane over knee] I will not allow anyone to slay me or my partner, whether it is the government or the man who gave me my start. Then there is my Sasha, my anarchist partner until his death three years ago.

[Find Sasha's picture] Together we fought the evils of law and brought many new lost souls to the beauty of anarchy. Our greatest stand against authoritative unfairness was when he sought to murder the industrialist Henry Clay Frick, who in collaboration with Andrew Carnegie sought to initiate and 18 percent wage cut – 18 percent! – to the workers of the Carnegie Steel Company. The Homestead Strike incited from this, and the union was destroyed.

[Pack picture of Sasha] We felt it was our duty to these people to do away with Frick. Sasha shot him twice but Frick did not die, and Sasha was sentenced to prison for his pains, 21 years.

[Find letters in drawer] These letters are a painful reminder of the nine years he spent in prison, and a painful journal of the one time I was forced to turn my back on my partner for something I believed in.

[Sit down with letters] You are probably too young to remember the assassination of President William McKinley in 1901, but it is fresh in my mind, as is the sad face of his assassin, a young Polish man named Leon Czolgosz. Leon was an aspiring anarchist, listened to my speeches religiously, occasionally offering his own interpretation. He did what he thought he had to do for the good of the people, and how was I to turn my back on him when my own Sasha had committed the same sort of violence.

[Stand up, pack letters] Sasha, from where he waited in prison, wrote that he felt it not to be a proper stand against the government; he and my fellow anarchists felt that the assassination had done the movement more harm than good. So there I was, caught between my partner and fellow anarchists, and my true opinions and beliefs, frustrated, confused as to where I should go. But my dedication to my cause overrides everyone and everything, and I chose to stand by him and offer him the support of a woman who understands the need to do what one thinks is right. But now they are all gone, and I am alone. Do you see what the men in my life have done to me? They have angered me, inspired me, challenged me, into living and breathing my cause so that it will never leave me, even when society says that a seven-decade old woman should be planting

flowers and doing cross-stitch. Never will you find Emma Goldman in idle retirement. My body is old, but my heart is still young with the hope for a peaceful society.

Now I am all done and you must go. I have many more stories to tell you, but you could not fill your whole newspaper with all of my protests and riots. But just remember this – one day the Queen of the Reds will be victorious in banishing government and establishing a society without laws, without war, and at peace.

WORKSHEET: WEBSITE ORGANIZATION

Begin planning out the places you will need in your website on paper before you start using the NHD Website Editor. Each page should directly support your thesis statement. **Remember:** These are just some beginning ideas. You may want to include more pages, fewer pages, or create subpages on your website. Just keep in mind the ease of navigation for your viewer.

Title

(Brainstorm a creative title for your website and write it here.)

Navigation

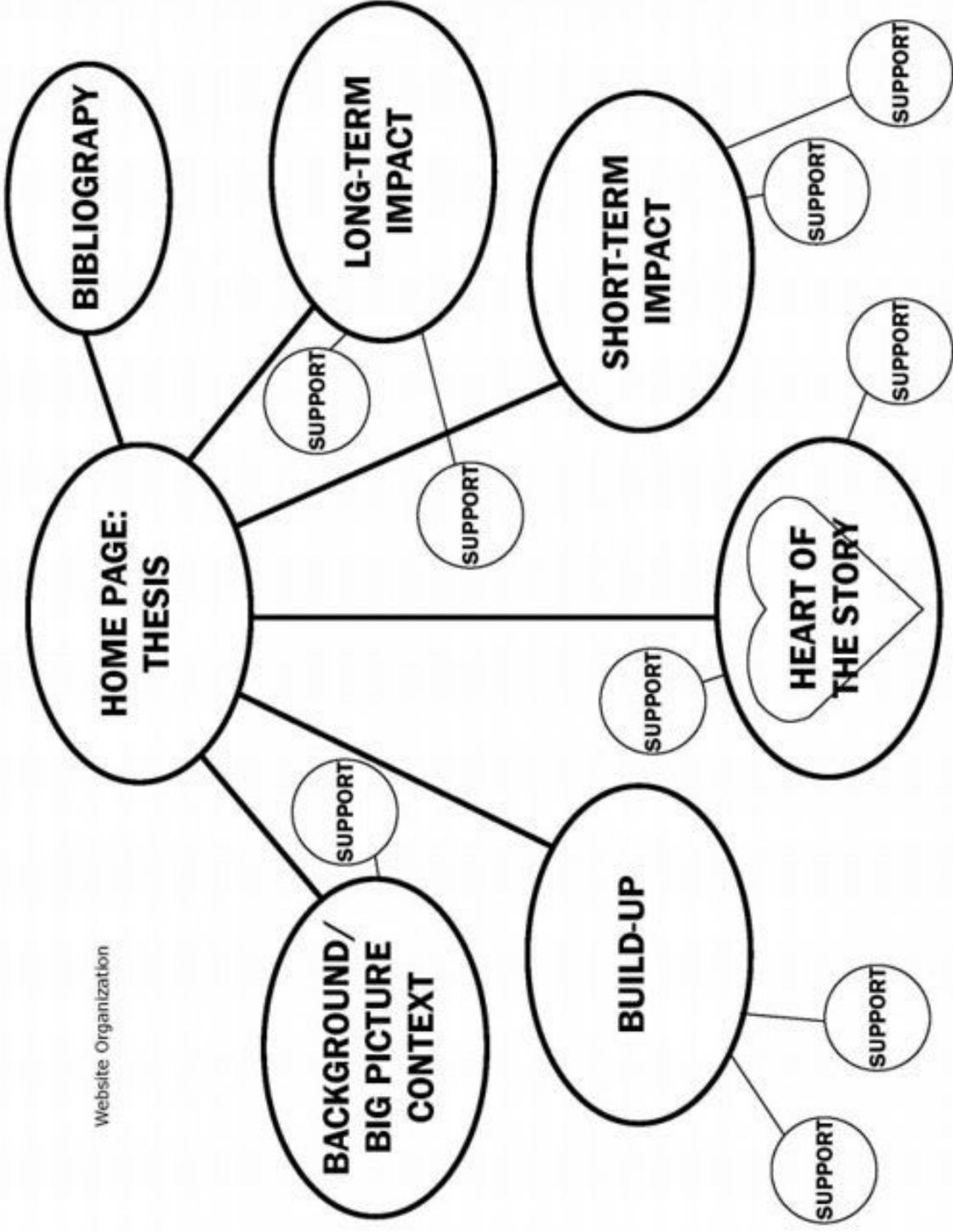
(Think about which pages would best support your thesis statement and write them below. Remember: You can add as many or few pages as you want on your website as long as you're organized!)

Home

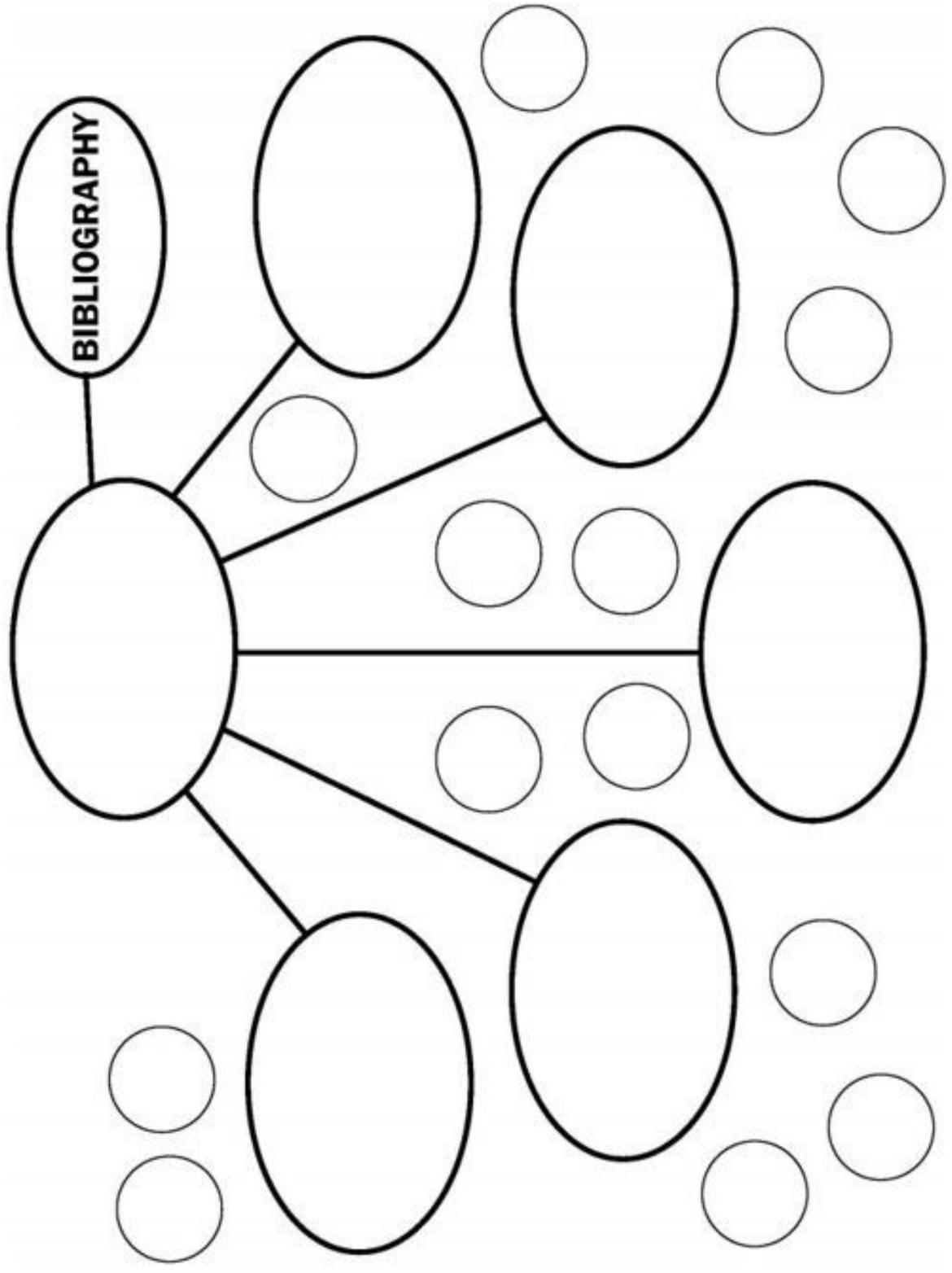
Process Paper & Bibliography

Thesis

(You will want to include your thesis on your homepage, but do not have to label it "thesis." Write your thesis here and use it as a guide to decide which pages you want to include on your website.)



Website Organization



HANDOUT: ORGANIZING YOUR INFORMATION FOR RESEARCH PAPERS

Research papers are the traditional way of organizing and presenting information. The best way to start your paper is to create an outline. It may be useful for you to physically write out your thoughts first, placing key events, points, and evidence on notecards and arranging them on a flat surface. This may give you a better idea about how exactly you would like to organize your paper.

1. Basic Outline

a. Introduction

- i. Use this section to briefly introduce your topic. Give the reader enough information to orient them about when and where your topic is happening. Don't spend a great deal of time explaining everything. That is what the rest of your paper is for.
- ii. Your thesis should be included in this first paragraph as well. It should help to outline the rest of your argument for the reader.

b. Body Paragraphs

- i. Each of these paragraphs should make a point that ties back to your thesis.
- ii. Tell a story with your writing. You want the information to be segmented and arranged in a way that flows from one point to the next.
- iii. You may want to consider tools like subtitles to orient the reader and make it easier to fill in your information as you write.

c. Conclusion

- i. The conclusion of an effective paper restates (in a slightly different way than the thesis) your argument and summarizes your evidence. Every sentence in this paragraph needs to be powerful and use an active voice. This is your final impression – so make it a good one!

2. Other Notes to Consider When Writing

- a. Physically arrange your work on flat surface. This often lets you see “the whole picture,” which normally can't fit on a computer screen.

- b. Don't throw anything away! You may want to discard a lot of your work as you go because it doesn't seem useful to you. However, often people who read early draft of your work may make suggestions to include a part you tossed away. Don't create more work by throwing parts away prematurely.
- c. Pay close attention to grammar, writing style, and citation. Avoid redundant sentence structures (starting sentences the same way) and use a thesaurus to spice up your writing.