

## **Plagiarism Identification and Investigation Process Guidelines**

**These guidelines apply to National History Day in Minnesota Regional/District contests and the Minnesota State History Day contest.**

### **Rules and Definitions**

The *NHD Contest Rule Book*, Section III. Rule 19 states: “You must acknowledge in your annotated bibliography all sources used in your entry. Failure to credit sources is plagiarism and will result in disqualification.”

According to Section I, Definitions, plagiarism is: “Presenting the work or ideas of others in ways that give the impression that they are your own (copying information word-for-word without using both quotations and citations, paraphrasing an author’s ideas without proper attribution, or using visuals or music without giving proper credit). Plagiarism in any form will result in disqualification from the contest.”

**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, Minnesota History Day’s goal is to use this is 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 are the only category reviewed in advance of the Regional/District or State contest.

- If a Website 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:** Documentaries, Exhibits, Performances, or Websites

- 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.



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**First-Round Research Papers:** When plagiarism is noted by judges during the off-site judging of Papers, staff will affirm and contact the teacher to discuss next steps.

**Please contact Minnesota History Day staff with any questions  
about these guidelines.**