

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 are 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.

Resources

Sample projects are available online from Minnesota History Day. Many teachers also keep samples from previous years to use as teaching tools for other students.

- Online from Minnesota History Day:
<http://www.mnhs.org/historyday/categories/sample-projects>
- Online from National History Day:
<http://www.nhd.org/ProjectExamples>