

# USING PUBLIC AND ACADEMIC LIBRARIES FOR HISTORY DAY

Research is an essential part of the History Day process. Students will meet a breadth of standards related to investigating a variety of types of sources as well as important skills about locating information that will be important for the rest of their lives. According to the research that Minnesota History Day has done on the impact of History Day, academic indicators improve as students access resources beyond the Internet as well as beyond their school library.

## Sequencing Visits

Different libraries are going to offer your students different types of resources, which may be more or less beneficial depending on where your students are in the History Day process.

- **Public libraries** tend to be more beneficial earlier on in the research process. They offer students access to more general sources, which students need as they begin to understand the general narrative of their topics. Keep in mind that as a first step, students may need to obtain library cards. Their library card will give them access to additional online databases, which will be helpful for both beginning as well as advanced research.
- **Academic libraries** are often a better choice for students who already know the basic narrative of their topic. Bringing students to an academic library before they have a topic selected or understand the basics of their topic may be frustrating to both students as well as library staff. These libraries may offer students access to more scholarly sources as well as primary source research. While working on campus, students will often have access to additional databases of scholarly journals or primary sources, to which their school or public library may not subscribe.

## Scheduling Visits

Most libraries will be excited to work with you and your students, but any library will need advance notice that you plan on bringing a school group to their institution. They may have maximum numbers of students that they can handle at one time, minimum time commitments for visits, may need to schedule extra staff, or request that students obtain library cards in advance. Once you've identified which institution is the best fit for your students, contact them to see about their policies and requirements.

## Preparing Students

Preparing your students for their field trip will benefit both them as well as library staff. Ask the library what tools might be available to introduce students to the library catalog. Searching for call numbers in advance will help to prevent logjams at computer terminals during the field trip as well as ensure that students can get started finding materials right away.

## History Day Library Hullabaloo

Minnesota History Day hosts a series of "Hullabaloo" at libraries across the state. At these no-cost events, extra library staff as well as History Day staffers will be on hand to help students with research as well as provide guidance on History Day projects. Check out our website for full listing of dates:

<http://www.mnhs.org/historyday/research>

## Interlibrary Loan

If taking a library field trip is not an option for you, introduce your students to Interlibrary Loan. This will help them to access additional resources from libraries across the state and country.