WRITING YOUR HISTORY DAY IMPACT STATEMENT

“LEADERSHIP AND LEGACY IN HISTORY”

History Day 2014-15
WHAT IS AN IMPACT STATEMENT?

The impact or thesis statement is usually one or two sentences that present an argument about the topic. The body of the paper or website, the script of the performance or documentary, the headings and captions in an exhibit then are used to support the thesis using evidence from the research.

A good thesis statement:

• Addresses a narrow topic
• Explains what the researcher believes to be the historical significance of the topic
• Connects the topic to the National History Day theme
AN EFFECTIVE IMPACT STATEMENT...

• States an argument
• Relates to the History Day theme: “Leadership and Legacy in History”
• Mentions three areas of focus: leadership, action(s), and legacy/impact(s)
• Uses 60 words or less
• Consists of one or two sentences only
• Is proven with evidence in the project
Develop an Impact (Thesis) Statement

NHD projects should do more than just tell a story. Every exhibit, performance, documentary, paper and web site should make a point about its topic. To do this, you must develop your own argument of the historical impact of the person, event, pattern or idea you are studying. The point you make is called a thesis statement. A thesis statement is not the same as a topic. Your thesis statement explains what you believe to be the impact and significance of your topic in history.
HERE IS AN EXAMPLE:

Topic: Battle of Gettysburg

Thesis Statement: The battle of Gettysburg was a major turning point of the Civil War. It turned the tide of the war from the South to the North, pushing back Lee’s army that would never fight again on Northern soil and bringing confidence to the Union army.
WHAT IS A “LEGACY”?  

Any ideas? 

A legacy is anything passed from one person or group to another over time. 

A legacy could be a material or tangible thing: 

✓ Money 
✓ Property 
✓ Something inherited
A legacy could be intangible, such as an idea or way of thinking.

✓ democracy: “the people rule”
✓ non-violent protest to make change in society
THINK ABOUT YOUR ORDINARY, EVERYDAY LEADERS...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEADERS/ACTIONS</th>
<th>EXPECTED OUTCOMES of their actions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents/guide</td>
<td>children become independent adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers/teach</td>
<td>students become knowledgeable citizens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaches/coach</td>
<td>athletes gain strength, skills, teamwork</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Leaders always hope for certain outcomes or results, but ACTUAL, LONG TERM outcomes are their legacies.

Example: **George and Martha’s parents guided them to eat healthy foods and do chores responsibly, resulting in their development into healthy, responsible adults.**

Notice three areas of focus?
✓ What are two parent actions?
✓ What legacy did George and Martha’s parents leave to them?
George and Martha’s parents guided them to eat healthy foods and do chores responsibly, resulting in their development into healthy, responsible adults.

Notice connections with the conjunction?

✓ and

Notice the cause/effect conjunction?

✓ resulting in

Any other combinations?
A NEGATIVE LEGACY IS POSSIBLE...

What if George and Martha’s parents did not guide them well?

Example: George and Martha’s parents did not guide them to eat healthy foods and did not require them to do chores, resulting in their development into unhealthy, irresponsible adults.

😊 In fact, George and Martha could still grow up to be healthy and responsible in spite of poor parent guidance, but their parents would not have provided that as a legacy.
ASK AN ADULT…

It might be helpful to ask your parents what legacy they feel has been passed on in your family.

Land, house, business legacy?
Traditions, such as celebrations or recipes?
Values?

Will *you* carry on those legacies?
While you may not be sure what legacies will be passed on to you, it is easier to look back at history and find legacies.

What is Lincoln’s legacy?

✓ What action did he take to achieve it?

What is Gandhi’s legacy?

✓ What action did he take to achieve it?

What is Bruce Bochy’s possible legacy?

✓ What action did he take so far to achieve it?

Other leaders?
### Now Try Your Topic:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List LEADER</th>
<th>List EVENT</th>
<th>List LEGACY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Who?</td>
<td>- What?</td>
<td>What impact or effect over time, passed on to others?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Why?</td>
<td>- When?</td>
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<td>- Where?</td>
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<td>- How?</td>
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CONNECT LEADERSHIP & LEGACY IDEAS WITH CONJUNCTIONS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contrasting Conjunctions</th>
<th>Cause/Effect Conjunctions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• But</td>
<td>• So</td>
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<td>• Yet</td>
<td>• After</td>
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<td>• In order</td>
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<td>• For</td>
<td>• Due to</td>
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SAMPLE STATEMENTS: DO’S AND DON’TS

Don’t: Martin Luther was born in 1483. He started the Reformation. (Fact)

Do: Beginning in 1517, Martin Luther reacted against Roman Catholic religious practices, especially the sale of indulgences, corruption, and the emphasis on salvation through good works. Luther’s Reformation succeeded in igniting a religious revolution, creating a new sect of faith, and later bringing change to the Roman Catholic Church.

Don’t: Emiliano Zapata wanted land reform. Want to know why? (Fact/Rhetorical)

Do: Under the banner “Reform, Freedom, Law and Justice” Emiliano Zapata commanded revolutionary forces in southern Mexico to uplift agrarian peasants through land reform. Zapata’s role in the Mexican Revolution helped foster a new constitution in 1917 which was later used to redistribute property to the nation’s rural poor.

Don’t: Adolph Hitler was an evil man that killed a lot of Jews. (Opinion)

Do: International reaction to the atrocities of the Holocaust led to a reform of the Law of Armed Conflict through the Geneva Convention of 1949 to include the protection of civilian persons in a time of war. The Fourth Geneva Convention laid the groundwork for international humanitarian law and is used to regulate and enforce war time crimes even today.
What is important about your topic?

Does your impact statement reflect the three most important areas of your topic?

Do you have enough evidence to prove each area of focus: leadership and legacy?

What should people learn from you to understand your topic’s importance?
JUDGE YOUR OWN DRAFT THESIS STATEMENT! DOES IT...

• *Take a stand?*

• Is the topic *narrow?*

• Is the thesis *clear and specific?*

• Can the assertion be backed up by *evidence?*

• Does it express *one main idea?*

• Does it tell the viewer why the subject is *historically significant?*

• Does it answer the “*So what?“ question or show change over time?

• Is it presented as a *statement*, not a topic or question?

• Is it historical?
NEXT STEPS:

Your teacher has a worksheet packet to help you compose and customize your own impact statement.

Complete the practice example questions: “Testing an Impact Statement.”

Experiment with composing your own impact statement for your topic. Try a variety of comparing, contrasting, and cause/effect conjunctions.
EXHIBITS

Historical exhibition presents information about an event, person, place, or idea from the past by physically displaying documents, images, or objects.

The exhibit category is three dimensional and is displayed on a physical structure. Exhibits use color, images, documents, objects, graphics, and design, as well as words, to tell your story. Exhibits can be interactive experiences by asking viewers to play music, solve a puzzle, look at a video, or open a door or window to see more documents or photos.

Ask yourself these questions:

• Does the item advance the story you are trying to tell?
• Is a document you are thinking of displaying too long or too wordy? Is it easy to read and understand? Will it take up too much space in your exhibit?
• Is the item visually interesting?
• What images best tell your story?
• Do you want to include artifacts in your exhibit?
• Will your exhibit contain audiovisual materials?
Here are the specific rules for exhibits from NHD
WEBSITES

A historical website is a collection of web pages, interconnected with hyperlinks, that presents primary and secondary sources, interactive multimedia, and historical analysis. Your website should be an accumulation of research and argument that incorporates textual and non-textual (photographs, maps, music, etc.) description, interpretation, and multimedia sources to engage and inform viewers about your chosen historical topic.

Viewers can move through the website in various undirected ways. Websites use color, images, fonts, documents, objects, graphics and design, as well as words, to tell your story.

Create your website with the NHD Site Editor. Click here to begin the registration process.
On the Brink of Disunion: The Election of 1860

On the Brink of Disunion : The Election of 1860
Creating a documentary is different from other categories because of the technology necessary. Before deciding to create a documentary, you should ask yourself the following questions:

• Am I interested in using computers, cameras, and other technologies?
• Can I conduct and record interviews (for the purpose of including film clips in the documentary)?
• Can I find film clips to use in my documentary?
• Are there enough still photographs related to my topic and that I can use in my documentary?
• Do I have access to equipment that will be needed to make a documentary?
• Is creating a documentary the best way to show off my topic?
Junior Division: Kill the Indian, and Save the Man: A Turn for the Better of Worse?
PERFORMANCES

A performance is a live, dramatic presentation of your topic's significance in history. You may perform individually or as part of a group. A performance should be a scripted portrayal based on research of your chosen topic. Your script should be structured on a thesis statement, supporting statements, and a conclusion. Your performance should have dramatic appeal, but not at the expense of historical information.

Memorizing, rehearsing, and refining your script is essential, so you should schedule time for this in addition to research, writing, costuming and prop gathering.
The Golden Age of Radio: Turning Points in American Culture
Contest Rule Book

Visit the 2015 National History Day Rule Book for more information