

## **Bucks Mont Regional National History Day Contest 2024** **Introduction for Teachers**

### **What is National History Day?**

National History Day (NHD) is an annual nationwide academic enrichment program for students in grades 6-12 that encourages thoughtful historical research, project-based learning, and a dose of friendly competition.

NHD gets students out of the classroom and into the world as historians. They are doing research and tracking down information about historic people and events. This research leads them to craft a thesis and build original conclusions shared through their different projects. NHD supports and reinforces critical writing, reading, and research skills for students.



Staff of the Bucks County Historical Society, which operates the Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle in Doylestown, PA, coordinates the NHD contest for students in Bucks and Montgomery counties.

### **How Does NHD Work?**

#### **Contest Progression:**

The contest progression for NHD starts on the local school level. NHD can be part of a school's curriculum or can be voluntary for students. Students, guided by teachers, work on NHD projects that they will submit at the regional level.

The Bucks Mont Regional NHD Contest is the regional competition and has taken place both in person and virtually in recent years. Winners from this competition will advance the Pennsylvania State Contest. Top entries from the Pennsylvania State Contest then go to the National Contest.

### Contest Divisions and Categories:

Students have the choice to communicate their historical argument and research as a project in one of five categories:

- Paper
- Website
- Documentary
- Performance
- Exhibit

Students can participate as individuals or groups, except in the paper category.

Categories are also divided by Junior and Senior divisions.

- Junior division: 6-8 grade
- Senior division: 9-12 grade

### Contest Theme:

All students design their project in relation to a common theme. The NHD national office selects a theme each year that students at every level of competition are required to use to guide their research and historical argument. This year's theme is *Turning Points in History*.

- For more information about the annual theme, read the [2024 National History Day Theme Book](#) written by the national office.
- Additional information can be found on the [2024 National History Day Theme Video](#) and the [2024 National History Day Theme Introduction Session Video](#).
- To help students get started selecting a topic related to the theme, distribute the [2024 National History Day Theme Graphic Organizer](#).

### Judging Process:

Teams of volunteer judges evaluate the student's projects based on evaluation forms created by the national office.

Judges review and rank the projects, and ultimately provide written feedback to the students. Students who advance to the state and national levels can use that feedback to edit their project for the next level of competition.

In the 2024 Regional Contest, students will meet in person with judges on Saturday, March 16, 2024 at Delaware Valley University to discuss and share their projects with volunteer judges.

## **2024 Buck Mont Regional National History Day Contest- Important Dates**

Teacher Registration Begins	Friday, Nov. 10, 2023
Student Registration Begins	Tuesday, Jan. 2, 2024
Student and Teacher Registration Closes	Monday, Feb. 12, 2024
<u>All</u> Student Projects Due Virtually	Monday, Feb. 12, 2024
In Person Regional Contest – Delaware Valley University	Saturday, March 16, 2024
PA State Contest – University of Scranton	April 20-21, 2024
National Contest – University of Maryland	June 9-13, 2024

## **NHD Resources for Teachers and Students**

Researching and designing an NHD project takes a lot of work and resources. Below is a list of helpful worksheets, videos, and webpages to help you and your students get started. The [official National History Day website](#) also has helpful resources for students and teachers.

1. Teacher Resources:
  - o [“Help I’m a New NHD Teacher”](#) video series produced by NHD staff
2. Student Resources:
  - o [“NHD Topic Tips”](#) video series produced by NHD staff
  - o [“NHD Quick Tips”](#) video series produced by NHD staff
  - o [“NHD Rules”](#) video series produced by NHD staff
  - o [“Quick Digital Research Tips”](#) video series produced by NHD staff
  - o For website category only: [NHDWebCentral Instructions](#) and [“NHDWebCentral Instructional Videos”](#) video series produced by NHD staff
3. [Official National History Day Contest Rule Book](#): Please make sure you and your students read the full rules prior to students beginning their projects.
4. [Guide to Student Research and Historical Argumentation](#): This comprehensive teacher guide, written by NHD and the Library of Congress, includes resources, activity sheets, and more.
5. [Finding, Analyzing, and Constructing History: A Research Guide For Students](#): This comprehensive guide, written by NHD and the Library of Congress, is filled with hints, tips, and activities for students.

## 6. Turning Points in History – Pennsylvania Topics:

### **Why Should You Choose a Pennsylvania Topic?**

There are a multitude of Pennsylvania stories relating to “turning points in history.” Any of these stories would be the starting point of an excellent NHD research project for students. Students can, of course, choose a national or world topic for their NHD project, but choosing a state project (or even a local Bucks or Montgomery County project) gives students the opportunity to explore local history

The following Pennsylvania history topics may be of interest to NHD students this year.

- Events:
  - 1787 Constitutional Convention
  - 1794 Whiskey Rebellion
  - 1859 Discovery of Oil
  - 1876 Centennial Exposition
  - 1892 Homestead Strike
  - 1902 Anthracite Coal Strike
  - 1944 Transit Strike
  - 1985 MOVE bombing
- People:
  - Henry C. Mercer (anthropologist, tilemaker, and collector)
  - Horace Pippin (artist)
  - Jim Thorpe (athlete)
  - Nellie Bly (investigative journalist)
  - Octavius V. Catto (civil rights activist)
  - Pearl S. Buck (novelist)
  - Rachel Carson (environmental movement author)
  - St. Katharine Drexel (philanthropist)

We strongly encourage your students to select a topic that speaks to their interests and passions.

### **Questions?**

For more information, please contact [historyday@mercermuseum.org](mailto:historyday@mercermuseum.org).