

History Day Interview Tips

Each entry should stand on its own. The interview **should not** affect the ranking of a project, either positively or negatively. However, the interview gives you the chance to clarify questions you have regarding the entry and, most importantly, gives students the valuable opportunity to talk about their projects with interested adults.

- Try to help students relax: Be friendly, smile, make eye contact, and speak with everyone in the group.

Good examples of interview questions:

“Why did you pick this topic?”
“Why did you pick this category/format?”
“What was your most valuable resource?”
“What was the most interesting thing you learned?”
“What would you have done differently?”
“What did each person in the group contribute?”
“How did you decide who would do what?”

Interview DON'Ts:

“Where do you go to school?”
“What town are you from?”
“I think your project would have been better if...”
“Why didn't you address...”
“This doesn't look like a student work. Who did this for you?”
“Your project is much better/worse than that project.”

Note: You do not need to ask all of the students the exact same questions, but you should spend the same amount of time on each interview.

Writing Comments

The comments you write on the evaluation sheets are essential to provide students with a rewarding History Day experience. Explain to students in a constructive way how they earned their ratings and how they might improve their entries. Remember to focus your comments on the analysis and historical content of the project, rather than students' theatrical or technical abilities. Refer to the judging rubric for more sample comments. **Be positive and constructive!**

Find something to praise:

“You analyzed this topic very well by....”
“You clearly supported your thesis by....”
“Your project was well organized and visually appealing because it....”
“It was a creative idea to.....”

Sample positive criticisms:

“You might think about doing X this way
“Another source you might find helpful is.....”
“It was clear from the interview that you understood the historical significance of your topic, remember to clearly explain that in your project.”