

National History Day in Arizona and 6-8th Grade Social Studies Curriculum

Items in regular font are extracted from the Arizona State Social Studies Standards for grades 6-8. Italics represent how NHD can be used to meet that section or those sections of the standards. Note that we have not included subsets of skills (for example, students should learn the Age of Exploration, but we did not specifically include understanding Henry the Navigator).

A complete set of these standards is available on the Arizona Department of Education website: www.ade.az.gov/standards/sstudies

Core research skills

1SS-E8 Demonstrate and apply the basic tools of historical research, including how to construct timelines, frame questions that can be answered by historical study and research, and analyze and evaluate historical materials offering varied perspectives with emphasis on:

PO 1-constructing and interpreting graphs & charts using historical data

PO 2-constructing various timelines of key events, people, and periods of the historical era being studied

PO 3-framing questions that can be answered by historical study and research

PO 4-describing the difference between a primary source document and a secondary source document and the relationships between them

PO 5-assessing the credibility of primary and secondary sources and drawing sound conclusions from them

PO 6-analyzing a historical source and identifying the author's main points, purpose, opinions versus facts and what other authors say about the same topic

PO 7-examining different points of view on the same historical events and determining the context in which the statements were made, including the questions asked, the sources used and the author's perspectives

PO 8-recognizing the difference between cause and effect and a mere sequence of historical events

NHD analysis of these skills:

*This set of research skills could run across all disciplines. The ability to locate, acquire, interpret and analyze knowledge indicates knowledge mastery, representing the basis for meeting the remaining curricular requirements. National History Day imposes a mandatory requirement for the use of **primary** resource, which are often not otherwise used in a classroom. Because of the requirement for an annotated bibliography, which specifically differentiates primary and secondary resources, students must gain an understanding of each.. They must also read materials which present different perspectives and, using those perspectives, draw conclusions about the accuracy and variations of opinion. To effectively compete in NHD, the student's entry will reflect these conclusions, and evaluation by judges will indicate whether the student has been able to interpret, **accurately** comprehend and convey the knowledge he/she has acquired. Timelines are encouraged in some types of entries, and an understanding of the time progression of events is imperative in all types.*

Specific Content Skills

FOCUS: World History (Ancient Civilizations through the Age of Exploration)

1SS-E9 Describe the geographic, political, economic, and social characteristics of the ancient civilizations of Egypt, Mesopotamia and China and their contributions to later civilizations...

1SS-E10 Describe the geographic, political, economic and social characteristics of the Aztecs, Mayas and Mound Builders and their contributions to later civilizations...

1SS-E11 Describe the major religions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam...

1SS-E12 Describe the geographic, political, economic and social characteristics of the Ancient Greek and Roman civilizations and their enduring impact on later civilizations...

1SS-E13 Describe the political and economic events and the social and geographic characteristics of Medieval European life and their enduring impacts on later civilizations...

1SS-E14 Describe how the Renaissance and Reformation influenced education, art, religion and government in Europe...

1SS-E15 Analyze the origins, obstacles and impacts of the Age of Exploration...

Teachers of middle school students engaged in study of world history can use a variety of approaches in using the NHD program. Ideally, each student or group can be assigned one aspect of the year's anticipated studies. For example, if the class is studying Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, four individuals or groups may pick topics relating to these, preparing an entry of any type (caution with papers!). Though the unit may not occur until April, the students will begin their research earlier in the year and continue it at appropriate times during the year. A foundation for research skills must be established first, generally by November! When the unit is scheduled for instruction, the students can present their entries to supplement the teacher's instruction, adding a different perspective, which allows for classroom discussion about those perspectives. Even if the entry is presented after the subject has been covered in the classroom, the NHD students' presentation will enhance prior knowledge.

The "core" topic might be something like "Judaism," but the student may be allowed to pick any subject within that area. Perhaps they will select Zionism and how it led to the settlement of Israel. That, of course, leaves many other aspects of Judaism which the teacher must teach, but it also enhances the understanding of Judaism by all of the students in the class. A good research project on Zionism will inherently demonstrate characteristics of Judaism which are both included and excluded.

Teachers may decide to assign the general topics, based on their plans for the year and their understanding of each student/group, or may create a list of topics which they believe would supplement their classroom instruction.

Some teachers allow students to pick any topic which relates to world history. This can work if the teacher then evaluates whether this benefits the entire classroom program. For example, a student may randomly decide that they want to study the Dalai Lama. Is that part of the anticipated program for grades 6-8? It probably is not, but it may aid the study of religions. Do you, as a teacher, want to do this in your classroom? That's your decision!

You should also ensure that they select researchable topics within the curriculum. The state guidelines are sufficiently general that they allow refining for topics, but if they select something so esoteric that there is no information, even contextual, then it will not enhance your instruction.

International topics are often more easily researched by the use of the Internet, correspondence and materials from university library collections, which can often be obtained through interlibrary loan at your local library..

Focus: United States and Arizona History (The American Revolution through Reconstruction)

1SS-E16 Explain the economic and political reasons for the American Revolution...

1SS-E17 Describe the aspirations, ideals and events that served as the foundation for the creation of a new national government...

1SS-E18 Describe the actions taken to build one nation from thirteen states...

1SS-E19 Describe the successes and failures of the reforms during the Age of Jacksonian Democracy...

1SS-E20 Describe the aims and impact of the Western expansion and settlement of the United States...

1SS-E21 Explain how sectionalism caused the Civil War...

1SS-E22 Explain the course and consequences of the Civil War and how it divided the American people...

1SS-E23 Analyze the character and lasting consequences of Reconstruction

The procedure for implementing these topics in the curriculum are the same as previously indicated. In addition, U.S. topics offer some unique opportunities for the 2002-03 theme: Teachers could require entries that are only based on biographies and select individuals from different time periods during the early settlement of America. As with world history, students can be assigned general topics (Confederate forces in the Civil War) and pick a particular

component or person (Andersonville Prison). Successful research on U.S. topics will often be based on primary resources, which can often be located through interlibrary loan from universities and from the National Archives. Ideally, students will look for interviews, photographs and diaries wherever possible.

Arizona topics should be carefully evaluated both for your classroom needs and for the probability of success should the student(s) advance. To succeed at the national finals, local topics must have national or international implications. For example, if the topic is "Water Reclamation in Arizona" (which is too broad), the entry must point out how that was and is significant for the southwestern United States and if there are any national implications. With a theme of "Rights & Responsibilities in History," have the decisions made regarding water use been responsible, not only for Arizona, but for adjoining states, and for Mexico?

Whenever possible, students researching Arizona topics should use Arizona historical institutions, which will enable them to more easily access primary materials.

Remember that very often both Arizona and U.S. topics can become international or world history. The story of a World War I soldier from Arizona may be relevant in the classroom of three areas of social studies: First, the story of an Arizonan and the home that he left, as well as the family story; Second, an American and his assimilation into the larger group of Americans, as well as the military experience; Third, World War I, France, weapons and all the inherent aspects of war and conflict.

In addition, such a topic often lends itself easily to primary research, as family members may have survived or letters and photographs may exist.

In this way, many topics can cross the different years' curricula. It is up to the teacher to determine if the selection of such a topic is beneficial within his/her own classroom. Since one of our goals as educators is to place all of history within its context, these may actually be the ideal types of entry, but only the teacher is in a position to assess that.