

## National History Day – A Differentiated Social Studies Unit

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Hr\_\_

Forest Hills Eastern's eighth grade challenge social studies class participates in the National History Day competition as a high-level differentiated social studies unit designed to teach students scholarly research and presentation skills, in the context of a study of history.

This unit teaches and expects students to apply scholarly skills (including thesis development, research, drawing conclusions, citation, writing and presentation skills) as they develop and present their research at a district (West Michigan) NHD competition held at Grand Valley State University on Saturday, March 16th. **This is a required event.** Students will spend over a marking period in research and preparation of their choice of a paper, documentary, website, theatrical performance, or exhibit. Their choice of topic is limited to the 2017-18 NHD theme, "**Triumph and Tragedy in History**" and to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum scope, U.S. History from the Revolution to the Reconstruction Period, et al.

Students who succeed in the district competition are invited and encouraged to attend the state competition on Saturday, April 27<sup>th</sup>, with the ultimate goal of winning at the National level the week of June 9<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>. National winners may receive national recognition as well as prizes, cash awards and/or scholarships.

Students may generally choose to work individually or (if eligible) with partners or in small groups. Students are encouraged to use great caution when considering potential partners, as the volume and intensity of the work can strain friendships and cause hard feelings. As an additional consideration, challenge classes generally remain an option only to those students who maintain a B or higher throughout the class. Since the loss of a partner due to being dropped from challenge social studies would be an unfair detriment to a student's NHD success, students who have any grade below an A- (who therefore could be in danger of leaving the class) may not work with partners. EMS is allowed to send three individual entries and three group entries in each category (except papers which do not offer group entries). One of each will come from each grade level, and the third will be chosen from either grade by the social studies teachers collectively.

### Work Expectations

The first phase (approx. 6-8 weeks) of the NHD project will be largely based on research of the topic. The class will spend their ACE class time working on NHD research for the entire 2<sup>nd</sup> marking period, with an EXPECTATION that the student will spend at least a half hour on it every weeknight as well. The *minimum* research requirement for the project to be accepted for a grade is as follows:

- 500 pages worth of documented personal reading research, taken from **at least** . . .
- 20 sources altogether, which must *include at least*:
  - A. 10 secondary sources and 5 primary sources
  - B. 10 sources that provide background information about the context of the historical period
  - C. 15 sources that are *literary* in nature (articles, books, etc. - NOT pictures, charts, maps, etc.)
  - D. 5 sources that are not Internet related
  - E. 3 sources that are published in book form (excluding any reference books)
  - F. 1 that is a non-published expert source (email or personal interview, for example)
  - G. 1 that required going out from school or home to acquire (i.e. a museum visit, personal interview, public library, etc.)

Once the minimum research requirement is met and the thesis statement developed and approved, the student(s) may select any category that remains available. At this point, slot will be given on a first earned, first given basis. If a student wishes to choose a category that is already taken by another in the class, he/she may be considered (based on quality of topic, research and thesis development) for the third slot at the close of the research period. If the student's entry is not chosen he/she will need to choose an alternate category from those that remain available.

Phase two of the project focuses on the assembly of the presentation. Some of this phase will take place in ACE during the 2<sup>nd</sup> marking period, but the majority of the work will be done as homework, since many of the presentations will involve materials that are

inconvenient to transport or store at school. However, approximately two weeks of class time will be devoted to this phase, allowing students to print off materials, design materials, organize key points, write scripts, etc. While NHD projects are required to be complete and ready for presentation by Friday, March 1st, it is understood that they will continue to be “tweaked” right up until each level of competition.

Presentation is the third phase of the competition. This phase provides for “authentic assessment” of the student’s learning for the unit. All students are expected to participate in the district NHD competition, on March 16<sup>th</sup>. In special cases where it is impossible for a student to participate in that forum, an alternative arrangement will be made for the student to present his/her research project to a high school A.P. US History class. Students must present their research in one of these manners in order to receive a presentation grade, or final unit grade.

## Grading

Daily Progress Grades: These will consist of a once weekly 5 point grade that represents a tally of the week’s points earned for progress criteria, i.e. productivity, organized procedure, time on task, etc.

Planning Grades: Planning will receive three grades, all of which are full credit for completion. The first is a 5 point project grade for having chosen a (tentative) topic for the NHD project by Friday, November 9<sup>th</sup>. The second is a 10 point project grade for completion of the “Thesis Question / Thesis Statement” worksheet by Friday, November 16<sup>th</sup>. The final 5 point project planning grade is for having chosen the presentation category (website, exhibit, documentary, historical paper, or performance) by Thursday, January 31st.

Research Grades: You will receive a midterm and final grade for the research Phase of the project. These will be “completion” grades, meaning that if the student meets the criteria listed on time, he/she will receive all the possible points, and until the criteria are met, no credit will be given. The 20 point mid-term research grade (on Friday, December 14<sup>th</sup>) will be based on the research requirements listed on the **NHD Midterm Research Expectations** assignment. The 20 point final research grade (on Friday, January 25<sup>th</sup>) will be based on the research requirements listed on the **NHD Final Research Expectations** assignment, at the end of the research phase of the unit. Please note that although the required minimum criteria will earn full credit for this grade, it is certainly not a guarantee that the final product will be successful. In fact students should expect that for their project to be competitive or academically successful (i.e. making it to state competition or getting an “A” in the class) the research will likely need to significantly surpass these *minimum* requirements. See final project grade below for details.

### Project Grades:

Process Paper: The process paper will be due during the week prior to the rough draft due date. This assignment will receive a completion grade of up to 15 points.

Rough Draft: Shortly before the regional competition, the class will display and present all NHD projects for parents, staff, and peers. During this time period, the classroom teacher will observe each presentation and grade the student based on the official NHD judging criteria.

Final Project Grade – District Presentation: During the actual District competition, students will present to a panel of college professors and other historians. This panel will provide the school with detailed numerical evaluation of each presentation. The highest one of these scores will be used to calculate the final project grade score.

Project Grades Criteria: Project grades will utilize the official NHD grading criteria which is as follows:

Historical Quality (60%): Historically accurate; shows analysis and interpretation; places topic in historical context; shows wide research; uses available primary sources; research is balanced.

Relation to Theme (20%): Closely relates topic to theme; Demonstrates significance of topic in history and draws conclusions.

Clarity of Presentation (20%): presentation is original, clear, appropriate, organized, well presented, and articulate; presentation has visual impact, engages the audience, and correctly uses maps, photos, multimedia, grammar, spelling, format, etc.