Documentary Basics
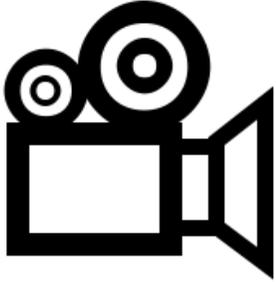
Documentaries are media presentations, combining a student-composed script with on-screen visuals. Imagine something you might see on PBS or the History Channel.

- **Ten minutes maximum.** From the first words or images on screen to the end of the credits, the documentary can be no longer than ten minutes. There is no minimum time for a documentary.

- **Includes brief credits at end.** Brief credits of major sources of information, not the full bibliography, must appear at the end. It's okay if they go by quickly.

- **"Say cow, see cow."** Students should include visual evidence on the screen that supports the narration they have written. If the script says "cow" the screen should show "cow."

- **Optionals:** While not required, a documentary may include background music, be separated into sections with titles, or include interviews with participants or experts.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY AND PROCESS PAPER

In addition to the documentary itself, judges will review the following written documents as part of the evaluation of the documentary.

- The **annotated bibliography** will show the research upon which the project is based. It should be separated, at minimum, into primary and secondary sources.

- The **process paper** answers key questions about how the students researched and created the project.
  - How did you choose your topic and how does it relate to the annual theme?
  - How did you conduct your research?
  - How did you create your project?
  - What is your historical argument?
  - In what ways is your topic significant in history?

Virtual Contest Documentaries

History Day students were permitted to use any software to create their documentary. In the virtual contest, students were instructed to upload their project to the web in a format that permits anyone with the link to view the project.

11001 10:00 AM
Test Documentary
Paper: **View Paper**
Documentary Link **https://drive.google.com/open?id=1ufivi5F2r2PuHZ5KQLbPP5O4OLRItAWk**

Judges will log into their Zfairs account to view the links to view the project and materials

- **View Paper:** Opens a PDF of the Title Page, Process Paper, and Annotated Bibliography.
- **Documentary Link:** Opens the link to the project, provided by students.

Troubleshooting Virtual Documentaries
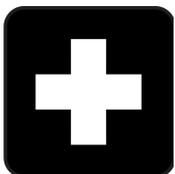
- **Do I need special software to view them?** No. They should play in your web browser.
- **What if the link doesn't work?** Contact the event coordinator right away. The students uploaded the file on their own - the files are not hosted by ZFairs. The link may be incorrect, or the student may need to adjust the privacy settings on the file. We will contact the student and get you the correct information. Judges should not hold these sort of clerical errors against a student's rank or evaluation.
- **How do I know if the documentary is student-run in a virtual contest?** Judges should assume all projects are able to be student-run.

How does a rubric-based evaluation work?

Judges assess each project against the **evaluative criteria** (categories on the left) and specific standards for each **level of achievement** (check boxes across the page in the same row). For each evaluative criteria, select the level of achievement best describes the project you are viewing.

- A project's level of achievement will likely vary across different evaluative criteria. All check marks **do not need to be in the same column** down the entire page (e.g. all good, or all superior).

- Scoring a project against a rubric is different from selecting projects to advance in the competition.
  - **Scoring a Project:** How a project scores on the rubric is based on the strength of the specific project against the criteria. Do not adjust the ratings of a project to account for which projects are moving on in a contest.
  - **Selecting Winners:** The project(s) that advance should generally have higher ratings than those that do not. Determining the strongest projects can be more difficult when ratings are about the same and judges should include robust written feedback to help support their decisions.

Historical Quality - 80%

The majority of a judge's evaluation is based on historical quality and is consistent across project categories. This includes: historical argument, wide research, primary sources, historical context, multiple perspectives, historical accuracy, significance in history, and student voice. **Judges must review our general judge training, in addition to this category-specific document, for detailed information on the historical quality criteria**.

Documentary Clarity of Presentation

Clarity of Presentation addresses how well the student used the category to present their ideas.

	SUPERIOR	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	NOT EVIDENT
AUDIO AND VISUALS	☐ Presents audio that enhances topic and is clear and easy to understand ☐ Provides visual sources that enhance topic	☐ Presents audio that is appropriate to topic and easy to understand ☐ Provides visual sources that are appropriate to topic	☐ Presents audio that is somewhat appropriate to topic and can usually be followed ☐ Provides visual sources that are somewhat appropriate to topic	☐ Presents audio that is not appropriate to topic or is hard to follow ☐ Provides visual sources that are not appropriate to topic	☐ ☐
TECHNICAL	☐ Provides articulate narration that does not contain grammatical or mechanical errors ☐ Provides visuals that are clearly focused ☐ Volume of audio components is even	☐ Provides narration that contains minor grammatical or mechanical errors ☐ Provides visuals that are mostly clearly focused ☐ Volume of audio components is mostly even	☐ Provides narration that contains several grammatical or mechanical errors ☐ Provides visuals with some blurriness ☐ Volume of audio components is uneven at times	☐ Provides narration that contains major grammatical or mechanical errors that impede understanding ☐ Provides visuals with significant blurriness ☐ Volume of audio components is mostly uneven	☐ ☐ ☐

Documentary Rules Compliance

Major Rule Violations: Have the potential to give a project an unfair advantage over their competition. Major violations must be taken into consideration when deciding rankings. **Consult with History Day staff if your top entries have a major rule violation.**
- Missing bibliography
- More than 15 seconds over the 10 minute maximum time limit
- No credits at end of documentary

Minor Rule Violations: Note on the judge sheet, but should not be the focus of a judge's written commentary. Should not influence a project's ranking, unless projects are *exceptionally* close in quality.
- Missing process paper
- Incorrect citation format, missing annotations, or bibliography not sorted into primary/secondary sources
- Inadequate to too fast credits at end of documentary
- Not including correct information on title page