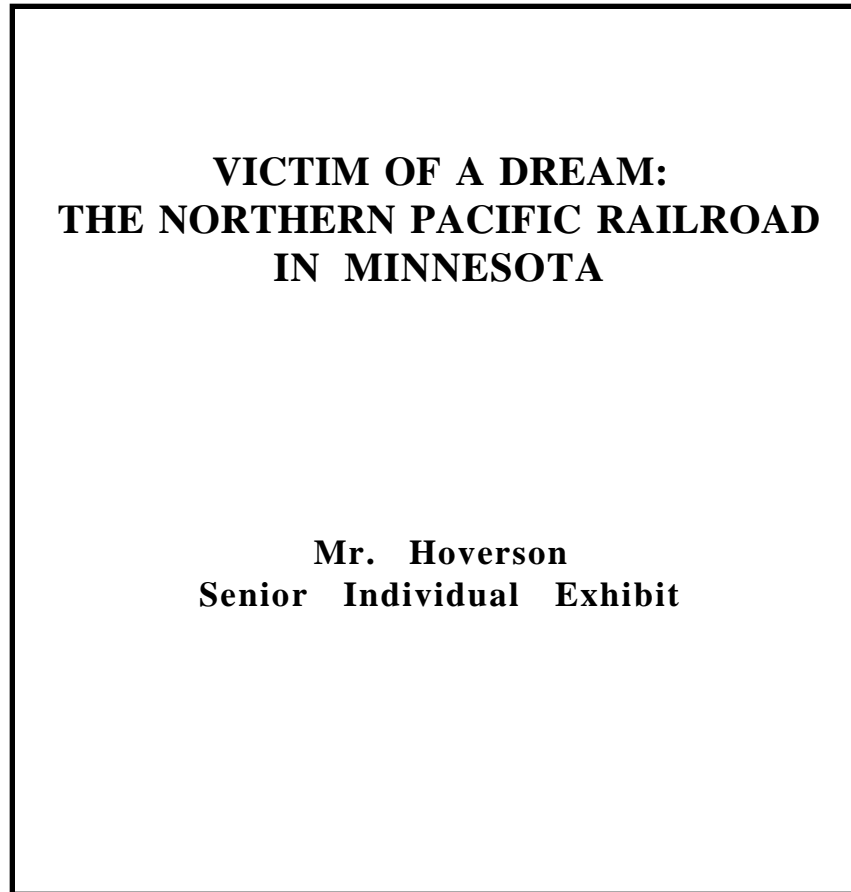


**THE COMPLETE STA GUIDE TO  
HISTORY DAY  
PART 1--REQUIRED WRITTEN MATERIALS**

**A: Cover Page**

The cover page is a simple item. Do not complicate it. You will lose points.



This is similar to the English class title page except:

- make the type bigger and use boldface (still use a normal font in black)
- ◆ only include History Day data
  - Junior or Senior High,
  - group or individual,
  - Paper, Exhibit, Documentary or Performance

Do not include any other data such as date or grade.

**Do not add borders, decorations, pictures, or anything else to the title page. It is against the rules and you will lose points.**

## **B: Research Description:**

The research description is designed to show what you learned about *research*, not what you learned about the topic. There are three parts: 1) How you picked the topic, 2) How you found your information, and 3) your thesis and conclusions. It is limited to 500 words, 350 is better.

According to past History Day contestants and state level judges, the Research Description and bibliography are probably more important than your project itself--so take enough time to do them right. Below is a shortened sample:

### RESEARCH DESCRIPTION

The idea for this topic came from a lecture on Minnesota's Red River trails during a course at the Minnesota Historical Society. Professor Gilman mentioned the town of Georgetown, MN, which I had never heard of before. I got to wondering what happened to it, because it seemed like it should have become a major town. Since I needed a topic to research to complete my requirements for this class, I decided to find out why the railroads ignored Georgetown when they laid out their routes in the Red River valley.

Most of the research for this project was completed at the Minnesota Historical Society because it holds all of the records of the Northern Pacific Railroad, as well as a substantial newspaper collection on microfilm and most relevant secondary sources. { . . . }

Working with the Northern Pacific records was both interesting and frustrating. This collection is literally every scrap of paper ever produced by the NP that still exists. They are fairly well cataloged, but not what we are used to today with computer databases. Luckily several experts, especially John Wickre, were able to suggest where I should look when something didn't turn up. One critical document that didn't turn up was the telegram { . . . }

The crossing of the Red River at a point other than Georgetown was a turning point for the NP because it denied them access to the trade with the north and forced them to look completely to Pacific trade and land sales to make any profit. The failure of either of these to develop quickly enough led to the collapse of the NP in the Panic of 1873.

Notice a few key points:

- it is OK to use first person here, because you are telling what you did
- in a group project you should include how you divided the work
- only in the last paragraph do you actually say much about the topic itself
- it is a really good idea to thank people by name. It is the right thing to do, and it usually impresses the judges that you actually talked to people
- **THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS TO MAKE YOUR RESEARCH SOUND INTERESTING.** *Do not make it sound like another boring trip to the library.* (If it was, you did something wrong.) You should focus on things you did that were new and different--don't just talk about the web unless you learned new search methods.

## **C: Annotated Bibliography** (NOT Works Cited, there's a difference)

For most judges and teachers, this is the single most important part of the project. Make sure you are complete. *Do not attempt to save time here by rushing through this or just doing the minimum amount of sources. Yes, we all know doing note cards and typing out all this source information is a big pain. But do it.* A dramatically shortened example follows.

### ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

#### ***Primary Sources:***

*St. Paul Pioneer and Democrat*, 28 April 1859.

This article explained the economic success of St. Paul and how it was related to the trade with the Red River region and Canada. It showed how much St. Paul residents desired a North-South connection.

Smalley, E.V., History of the Northern Pacific Railway, (New York, G.F. Putnam's Sons, 1883).

This book was the first history of the NP and has much valuable information, but it seems to have been written at least in part as a promotional tool, and has nothing but praise for the NP even when it was clear they had made a mistake.

#### ***Secondary Sources:***

Francaviglia, Richard V., "Some Comments on the Historic and Geographic Importance of Railroads in Minnesota," Minnesota History, Summer 1972

This article is the base of all analysis of railroad routes in Minnesota. It sets out the basic chicken-egg nature of the question of whether cities were first or railroads in certain locations.

Gluek, Alvin C. Jr., Minnesota and the Manifest Destiny of the Canadian Northwest, (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1965).

This book explained the desire of many Minnesotans to expand to the Northwest and had a lot of history of the fur trade era. It was also the single best source of other sources that I encountered.

Please note:

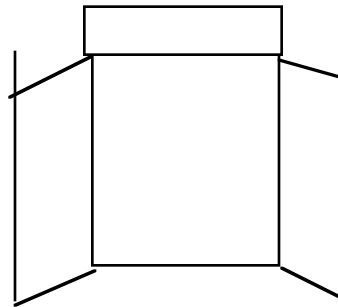
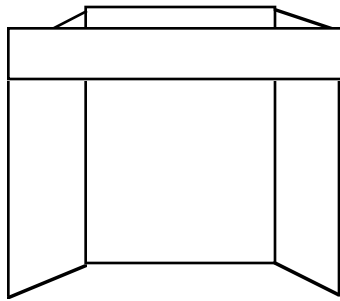
- *Please remember: Primary sources are those containing some sort of eyewitness material, **NOT** the ones you used the most.*
- Clearly separate primary and secondary sources. Consult a teacher if a source could be either or both.
- Alphabetize sources by author or periodical within primary/secondary types
- Indent everything except the first line of each entry
- Double space both between entries and between source and notes
- make the notes show some insight. Don't just say "This book had some pictures." Show that you can evaluate the worth of a source.

- **D: EXHIBIT ISSUES:**

- Because most projects are exhibits, you need to do something to make yours stand out. Here are some suggestions from judges and past winners.

- 1. Title.

- Make it large. It should be readable from 20 ft. away.
- Don't sacrifice clarity for flash. In other words, don't alternate letter color or size just to make it different.
- Never use yellow, orange, or any other light color in your title
- If possible, move your title away from the rest of the exhibit, either above or across the upper front (see below)



- 2: Construction.

- **MAKE IT PORTABLE! MAKE IT EASY TO TAKE APART AND PUT TOGETHER!** You have to bring it to school, and maybe several other places. **MAKE SURE ALL THE PIECES FIT IN YOUR CAR!**
- **MAKE IT LIGHT!!** Sure, 3/4" plywood is sturdy. It also weighs a ton. Foam core board is your best bet, or else something with a collapsable frame.
- Duct tape is your friend, but clear plastic packaging tape is better
- Cardboard is not as sturdy, and needs lots of external support

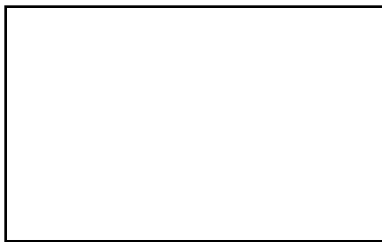
### 3: Text:

#### A: Content and length.

Student composed text, including all titles and captions, is limited to 500 words. This is about two pages of typed text for most people. This is not much, so make the most of it. Here's how. . .

- Do not have any long explanations of anything. You should not have any single block of text longer than 100 words.
- Use quotes as captions and explanations whenever possible. Remember, a quote is a picture of an idea. Quotes also help you get analysis into a caption. See examples below.

#### WRONG



This is a B-17 Flying Fortress.

#### RIGHT



“We loved flying the B-17-G. We always felt safer with the extra gun turrets on the new model. My crew shot down at least one German fighter each week.”

- Bob Schaefer,

B-17 navigator

See the difference? The first one is boring and obvious. The second one still tells what is in the picture, but also gives an opinion, some analysis, an example of real history, *and doesn't cost you a single word against your 500 word limit.*

- Group pictures around captions or quotes. Then you can show connections between illustrations and still save words.
- Let the illustrations tell the story. Use documents (or copies of them) whenever possible--and just add a little explanation.

Here are some things you may not and should not do:

- Do NOT cut a picture out of a book and leave the caption on from the book. It looks really bad--as if you couldn't come up with a caption of your own, and most judges will not consider it as a quote, so you gain nothing.
- Do NOT make up quotes just to get around the word limit. Judges can figure it out.

3. Text, continued:  
B. Layout.

Be neat. Please?! Here's how.

\*\*Type out *everything* on the computer. (Don't use adhesive letters, they are expensive, don't look all that great, can't be moved easily, and gain you nothing.)

\* **No** text on any exhibit should be smaller than a **14 pt.** font. The line above is in New York 14 pt. Using **boldface** is another good idea. Don't force your teachers or judges to squint.

\*Either center or justify all text. See examples below.

Best (Centered)

Railroads typically used contracts such as this to assign work on the line. They established prices and rates for every possible part or job used in constructing the line.

Correct (Justified (which means stretched out to both sides))

Railroads typically used contracts such as this to assign work on the line. They established prices and rates for every possible part or job used in constructing the line.

Wrong (simple left justified)

Railroads typically used contracts such as this to assign work on the line. They established prices and rates for every possible part or job used in constructing the line.

The other problem with this is not just the uneven look, it is the tendency of students to cut around the outline of the text instead of making a neat looking rectangle.

**CUTTING!!!**

Don't make your text or pictures look as if they were cut out by your dogs, or on the bus, or in the cafeteria before school with a plastic knife. Use a paper cutter or an exacto knife or other blade with a metal straight edge.