

National History Day

is a yearlong program engaging over 500,000 students in research, writing, interpretation, and the presentation of history based projects at a district, state, and national level. Each year thousands of Oklahoma students actively become young historians through the program. Here is one example of how you can participate!

Activity: Developing a Research Plan

Suggested Grades

6-12

Overview

Historians use primary and secondary sources to interpret the past. Primary sources are items from the time of an event. This can be a letter, diary, newspaper article, photograph, piece of music, and more. Secondary sources are items written or produced after an event. Historians write secondary sources in the form of books or journal articles.

Objectives

Through sources, historians have the chance to see what the past looked like using the words of people who participated in or witnessed events. This activity will help students develop a research plan.

Time Needed

Portions of three class periods.

Materials Needed

Access to the library
Access to the internet

Instructions

- 1 Discuss what a primary and a secondary source is and how they are used.
- 2 Have students pick a topic. Allow students to think big, such as the Civil War, and then narrow their topic to a specific moment, individual, or event.
- 3 First ask students to identify 1-3 specific secondary works that address their topic. Have students write a short description of the work.
- 4 Using the bibliographies of these books, have students examine the materials the author used to create their interpretation. Have students identify 1-2 journal articles cited in the work. Ask the students to find copies of the
- 5 articles and provide a short written description of the work.
- 6 Using the bibliographies of the books, have students identify 1-2 newspaper articles used by the author. Have students find copies of the newspaper articles and provide a short written description.
- 7 Using the bibliographies of the books, have students identify 1-2 primary sources such as a letter, diary, manuscript, personal paper, or government document. Have students locate the item and describe how they found them.
- 8 Have students prepare a flow chart showing how they began with a secondary work and worked through identifying primary sources to use.

Additional Information

If you would like to find out more about National History Day in Oklahoma you can contact us at 405-522-3602 or visit www.okhistory.org/historyday.