

# Chicago Metro History Fair Documentary Rules

**Documentaries are computer-based, video, DVD, CD-ROM or slide presentations with a narrative structure. *Websites are not accepted in the Documentary category.***

RULE 1: Individuals or groups of no more than five may produce a documentary.

RULE 2: Documentaries may be produced for computers, videos, or slide presentations.

RULE 3: Projects may not exceed ten minutes. Time begins when first image appears and concludes after credits.

RULE 4: Media presentations must be created, produced and narrated by the students.

RULE 5: All media projects should be self-running. Projects that do not comply are ineligible for the State or National levels.

RULE 6: Project topics must be connected to Chicago—even when the national theme is being used. Non-Chicago topics will still be evaluated but will not be eligible to advance. *Junior Division participants may do topics in Illinois history.*

RULE 7: Plagiarism is not accepted, and constitutes grounds for disqualification.

## **PENALTY POINTS** (*High School only*)

Exceeds Time Limit: Minus 2 points each full minute over ten minutes

(*10 points maximum penalty*)

No Summary Statement Form: Minus 10 points

Bibliography not annotated: Minus 5 points

No bibliography: 0 points in the sources category

## **Documentary Guidelines**

See "[The Final Product](#)" in History Helpers for further guidance.

- A documentary uses visual evidence such as photographs, maps, film clips, interviews and employs charts and other graphic organizers. Technical quality is important, but it does not outweigh the need for solid historical knowledge and analysis.
- The project should be self-running and self-narrated (once the project begins, the student shouldn't operate the equipment). Students must supply their own computer or DVD player; CMHEC can only supply the television and VCR. Many completed

computer-produced projects are not dependent on the technology and can be transferred to a video. We *recommended* students transfer their project to a videotape.

- Narrator(s) should speak in measured tones (both speed and pitch) and enunciate clearly. Background music should not conflict or distract from the voiceover.
- In “Powerpoint” presentations, lengthy text should be avoided. A general rule is no more than 10 lines per “slide.” Avoid text sizes smaller than 18. If text is used in a computer or video project, be sure the text and background are contrasted. For example, red on green or yellow and white combinations are difficult to read. The type should be large enough to read easily and should not scroll by too quickly for the average reader. Judges need to spend their energies evaluating the content of the documentary and should not struggle to actually read it.
- Students will have five minutes at the beginning and five minutes at the end to set up and take down their equipment.
- There are no penalties for being under 10 minutes in length, however, judges usually take the abbreviated time as an indication that the knowledge and analysis needed further development.
- Students must supply their own equipment and accessories. CMHEC will supply the television and VCR but cannot supply computers or DVD players.