CRCS First Annual History Fair

**Overview:** A “history fair” works on the same principles as a science fair. The main idea behind both is that students need to be given an opportunity to explore ideas interesting to them and independently guide themselves through every step of their own learning. In education this is often called inquiry based learning. As a teacher I place a high priority on the inquiry skill and as a result this project is in replace of a final exam and worth 15% of the students overall grade. In the space below I have tried to outline for students and parents alike the steps required to complete this project successfully.

**Step #1 Choose a topic**: For some this may be the most difficult step. Once a topic is chosen it may change or it might morph into a new topic, change is acceptable. In all cases the **MORE SPECIFIC THE TOPIC THE BETTER THE PROJECT**. Most likely as a student learns more the project may get more specific. There are some important rules around choosing a topic. Below I have created a chart that will hopefully guide students in project selection.

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|  | Grade 8 | Grade 9 |
| Time frame of the topic | The topic chosen must be between the years or relate to the time frame between 350 AD and 1600 AD | The topic chosen must be between the years or relate to the time frame between 1492 AD and 1815 AD |
| Location or Geography | Topics should limit themselves to Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East. | Topics should limit themselves to Europe North and South America, or Australia |
| Topics covered in the curriculum | The following is a list of topics we have or will cover this year. They may prompt the students to think about something they are interested in.   * Fall of Rome * Early Dark Ages * Islam * Judaism * Medieval Christianity * High Middle Ages * Crusades * Schisms * Plagues * Late Middle Ages * Renaissance * Reformation | The following is a list of topics we have or will cover this year. They may prompt the students to think about something they are interested in.   * Exploration * Imperialism/Colonialism * Early Settlers * First Nations Culture * North American Geography * Fur Trade * Colonial Warfare * American Revolution * French Revolution * Napoleon * War of 1812 * Development of Democracy |
| Topic Ideas and Prompts | 1. Art and Artists (music, dancers, painters etc. who shaped the age) 2. Intellectuals (inventors, and great thinkers who shaped the age) 3. Spiritual (God’s protection of his church or his people) 4. Inventions (development of tools, weapons, clothing etc,) 5. Disasters (natural and man made problems) 6. Commerce (farming, trade and transportation of the time) 7. Culture (holidays, religious ceremony, traditions and superstitions) 8. Early settlers (Early people to North America) 9. Environment (decisions made by man that affected the planet) 10. Famous Politicians (Men and women who shaped government) 11. The Common Man (A look at the majority or the average) 12. Events (Wars and moments which shaped history) | |

**Step #2 Initial Research:** Once a topic or even a prompt has been selected some general research must be done. This is normally the phase where the idea is refined and made more specific. For example a student might begin by researching the crusades but might end up doing his topic on the political impacts of the first crusade on British politics, or the development of shields over the crusades. This step is critical to develop a good inquiry question.

**Step #3 Develop an Inquiry Question:** The inquiry guides the student. **IT IS A CRITICAL STEP.** Students who do not have an inquiry question tend to be limited to regurgitating the material from the internet without thinking it over and will not receive a good mark. Essentially the Inquiry question is a question the students’ research will seek to find an answer to. Good Inquiry questions will force students to search hard and answers may not always be conclusive. Bad inquiry questions can quickly be found on Wikipedia.

Good Inquiry Questions What was the expectation of women during the high middle ages, and did they conform to those expectations?

What role did jousting play in European culture and was it purely sport or did it have an application in battle?

Bad Inquiry Questions Who are some famous women of the Middle Ages?

What are some of the parts and pieces of a jouster’s weapons and armor?

**Step #4 Research:** Research MUST be done by the student. I want at least one book/article that is not reference book for a grade 8 project and at least two books/articles that are not internet resources or reference books for a grade 9 project. All pictures and ideas must be referenced.

**Step #5 Representing your learning:** There are three parts to representing your learning.

1. The Station/ Exhibit
2. The Research Paper/Essay
3. The Artifact
4. The Station or Exhibit The station normally consists of a poster backdrop. Often this

backdrop folds out into a three sided poster. The backdrop will need to be self standing. This means either some sort of light weight frame which stands the poster up or it could mean using materials such as foam board, gatorboard, or even cardboard. The overall width of the backdrop when folded out should not exceed 3.5 feet. On this backdrop there will be information, titles, pictures, and the inquiry question. Everything on the backdrop should be viewable from a distance.

1. The Paper At a **grade 8 level** this will be a three page 750 wordpaper (double

spaced) it will State the inquiry question in an introduction and answer each of the following sections: How does this topic influence history, how did society, technology, economy influence my topic, Why is this topic important, you may have additional sections if you wish. The paper will state a brief conclusion which will clearly answer the inquiry question.

At a **grade 9 level** this will be a three page 750 word historic essay (double spaced) The inquiry question will be treated like an essay question. Students will develop a thesis to their own inquiry and have at least three valid points which prove their thesis.

Both grades will be expected to include a bibliography. The bibliography will include all materials read, quoted, used in any way shape or form including pictures. (Note as stated previously in these instructions both grades will be required to find non-internet sources)

1. The Artifact Depending on the student the artifact will range in importance. For

some projects, students will want to build a model or diorama. Other students may want to act out a short skit or film themselves acting a short skit. I will list a couple of ideas of what the artifact can be.

* Working scale model.
* Film
* Interview
* diorama
* construction
* Computer generated environments
* Live skit or dance.

There are many more options beyond these. Students should let their own personal skills guide the type of artifact they present so that the project will feel exciting rather than daunting.

**Step #6 Presenting your Learning:**  All projects will be presented at the history fair. Late projects will not be viewed by peers and will receive a late penalty. The history fair, in terms of importance and priority is to be treated like a final exam, in the event of sickness you will need a doctor’s note, students missing the history fair due to previous commitments must arrange with the teacher in advance of the date. The History Fair will be on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, students will need to arrange their own transportation of their projects. The history fair will take place in the gym, students will be expected to set up their projects independently, explain their project and answer questions about their inquiry to other grades and students who will view their work. They will also explain their projects to me. I will grade them during the history fair. I will mark the history Fair on the following rubrics and checklists.

The Exhibit (40 points)

The exhibit has been reviewed for grammar and writing flaws 1 2 3 4 5

The title and inquiry of the exhibit are clearly stated and interesting 1 2 3 4 5

The exhibit is organized and its layout is logical with clear subtitles/subtopics 1 2 3 4 5

The exhibit has visuals which have captions and are appropriately. 1 3 5

The exhibit mixes primary and secondary sources 1 3 5

The exhibit can be viewed easily from 5 ft away 1 2 3 4 5

The exhibit itself is well constructed and is aesthetically pleasing 2 4 6 8 10

The Paper (35 points)

The paper has been edited for grammar, spelling, punctuation or layout flaws. 1 2 3 4 5

The paper has a clear main idea stated in the opening paragraph. 1 3 5

(Grade 8) The paper has a thorough paragraph devoted toward each section 1 3 5

(Grade 9) Strong points which link to the thesis guide the body paragraphs 1 2 3 4 5

Word choice and writing fluency is at grade level. 1 2 3 4 5

A bibliography is formatted appropriately and includes the necessary material 2 4 6 8 10

The conclusion summarizes the paper without adding new information 1 2 3 4 5

The paper includes the students own ideas and analysis and did not only summarize 2 4 6 8 10

The Artifact (30 points)

The artifact heightens interest and is engaging to the audience. 1 2 3 4 5

The artifact is well put together (quality) 1 2 3 4 5

The artifact has involved time, study, expertise and process. (effort) 2 4 6 8 10

The artifact is unique and has an artistic quality (creativity) 1 2 3 4 5

The artifact relates to both topic and inquiry question 1 2 3 4 5

The Interview (15 points)

The student(s) can answer questions about their topic 1 2 3 4 5

Student know the meaning of their boards content 1 2 3 4 5

Students can explain the importance of their exhibit and artifact 1 2 3 4 5

Total History Fair Points = 120