Which Category Is Right for Me?

National History Day in Nevada · Innovation in History: Impact, Influence, Change

Choosing the right category is one of the most important decisions you'll make. Pick the format that best fits your strengths — not just what sounds cool. You'll spend months on this project, so choose something you can sustain.

01 Ask Yourself These Questions First

Are you working alone or with a group?

Paper is the only individual-only category. All others allow groups of 2–5 — but individual entries are also allowed in Exhibit, Performance, Documentary, Website, and Podcast.

What grade are you in?

Grades 4–5 (Elementary): Poster, Podcast, or Performance only. Grades 6–12: Paper, Exhibit, Performance, Documentary, Website, or Podcast (Poster is Elementary only).

What does your innovation story look like?

Lots of images and maps? Consider Exhibit or Website. A dramatic moment? Consider Performance. A story that unfolds over time? Consider Documentary or Podcast. A complex analytical argument? Consider Paper.

What are your strengths?

Writer → Paper. Builder/designer → Exhibit or Poster. Actor/speaker → Performance or Podcast. Filmmaker/editor → Documentary. Tech/web designer → Website.

02 Category Snapshot

✍	**PAPER** Jr/Sr · Individual only
Best if	You love to write and argue. You want to go deep into analysis. You're comfortable with footnotes.
Watch for	No group option. Word count is strict (1,500–2,500). Citation format matters to judges.

🖼	**EXHIBIT** Jr/Sr (Poster for Elem) · Individual or group (2–5)
Best if	You're visual and hands-on. You can say a lot in a small space (500 words max). You like building things.
Watch for	Physical build requires transport. Every word on the board counts toward your 500-word limit.

🎭	**PERFORMANCE** All grades (Elem ends at State) · Individual or group (2–5)
Best if	You're a natural performer. You can turn historical analysis into drama. Your topic has clear conflict and voices.
Watch for	Must be scripted from research (not improvised). ≤10 minutes (6 minutes for Elem). No costumes outside Performance.

🎬	**DOCUMENTARY** Jr/Sr · Individual or group (2–5)
Best if	You can operate a camera and editing software. Your topic has good visual sources. You're technically confident.
Watch for	You must run all equipment yourself. ≤10 minutes. No live narration during judging.

💻	**WEBSITE** Jr/Sr · Individual or group (2–5)
Best if	You're comfortable with web tools. You have a lot of images, documents, or media to organize. You like navigation and structure.
Watch for	Must use NHDWebCentral. ≤1,200 words. ≤3 min multimedia. No links to external sites.

🎙️	**PODCAST** ★ All grades (Nevada only) · Individual or group (2–5)
Best if	You have a strong speaking voice. You're comfortable with audio tools. Your topic has good audio sources.
Watch for	No dramatization allowed. ≤10 min (Jr/Sr) or ≤6 min (Elem). Stays at State — no Nationals.

🖌️	**POSTER** ★ Elem only (grades 4–5) · Individual or group
Best if	You're in 4th or 5th grade and new to NHD. You want to tell a story visually with images, captions, and your own words.
Watch for	≤350 student-composed words. Must be completely flat. Stays at State — no Nationals.

★ **Nevada-only:** Podcast and Poster are Nevada-only categories. They do not advance to the National Contest in Maryland.