

# Rubric Update Summary

## National History Day® 2021-22

National History Day collected feedback from teachers, students, and judges on the evaluation rubric first used in the 2020-21 contest season. Using data from surveys at the affiliate and national levels, a task force identified areas for improvement and updated the rubrics. While not exhaustive of all changes, this document summarizes the major changes from the version used last year. This document is the first step in sharing additional materials for judges, teachers, and students.

### Rubric Changes: What We Heard from You

**Keep the rubric!** You were overwhelmingly happy with the rubrics - so we're keeping this format! This type of evaluation aligns with classrooms and helps students to better understand judging decisions. Judges had more clarity, and felt more confident and consistent in making decisions.

**Combine the two comment boxes.** The two separate comment boxes were confusing and unnecessary. The new form combines these into one comment box.

**Rethink the column headers.** Old habits die hard. Judges were still relying too heavily on the column headers, instead of the descriptors, to evaluate projects. To break with the old form, and remove value-laden language, we have revised the column headers to the following:

Previous	Revised 2021-22
Superior	Exemplary
Excellent	Proficient
Good	Developing
Fair	Novice
Not Evident	Not Evident

**Elevate the importance of the annual theme.** The annual theme criterion had previously been a subset of the historical argument section, which many of you felt minimized its importance in evaluation. The annual theme criterion now stands on its own line in the revised rubric.

**What is student voice?** Many of you loved the idea of student voice, but were unclear on what it meant. The descriptors have been revised to better define this term. The student voice criterion now appears in the **Clarity of Presentation section**, as the criterion is focused on how students have presented their ideas and supported (not overwhelmed) these ideas with evidence.

**Definition:** Student voice refers to your ideas and analysis. Your argument and your supporting analysis must be clear in your project. Do not let supporting evidence, such as quoted material from primary or secondary sources, overwhelm your voice. Make your case (or argument) using your own words based on your research. (*National History Day Contest Rule Book, page 12*)

	EXEMPLARY	PROFICIENT	DEVELOPING	NOVICE	N/E
STUDENT VOICE	<input type="checkbox"/> Student analysis is consistently clear and balanced between their own words/ideas and supporting evidence.	<input type="checkbox"/> Student analysis is mostly clear and balanced between their own words/ideas and supporting evidence.	<input type="checkbox"/> Student analysis is somewhat clear and balanced between their own words/ideas and supporting evidence.	<input type="checkbox"/> Student analysis is limited in clarity and balance between their own words/ideas and supporting evidence.	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Remove negative language.** You felt like words such as “weak” and “fails to” had the potential to be demoralizing to learners. We agree, and those descriptors have been revised.

**Streamline this process even more.** Some of you expressed concern about how much time the new rubric would take at in-person competition. Part of this concern was the many different terms of measurement (woven, addressed, mentioned, integrates, etc.) used on the previous form.

When possible, we have moved to a consistent response scale throughout the form. This is the same approach that you are likely familiar with in customer satisfaction surveys. Using the same terms throughout the rubric will allow judges to focus on the criteria, not on a changing vocabulary of scale.

Column Header	Response Scale Keyword
Exemplary	Consistently
Proficient	Mostly
Developing	Somewhat/Sometimes
Novice	Limited/Minimal
Not Evident	<i>No descriptor</i>

**Add better clarity between levels of achievement.** Using a consistent response scale allowed us to add more clarity between levels for each criterion (exemplary, proficient, developing, etc.). Previously, judges were asked to pick the exact match between the descriptor and the project. Was the theme woven, addressed or mentioned? This was challenging without a shared understanding of those words.

Now, judges are comparing the same thing across each criterion line. In this example, judges are focusing on the clarity of the theme and connection of the project to the theme. Each level represents a step in a spectrum from consistently to limited. Judges will pick the statement that best represents the project’s strength in that criterion.

2020-21 Rubric		SUPERIOR	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	N/E
	ANNUAL THEME	<input type="checkbox"/> Annual theme woven throughout the project	<input type="checkbox"/> Annual theme addressed in the project	<input type="checkbox"/> Annual theme mentioned in the project	<input type="checkbox"/> Annual theme connection is unclear	<input type="checkbox"/>

2021-22 Revised Rubric		EXEMPLARY	PROFICIENT	DEVELOPING	NOVICE	N/E
	ANNUAL THEME	<input type="checkbox"/> Annual theme is consistently clear and connected to the topic in the project and argument.	<input type="checkbox"/> Annual theme is mostly clear and connected to the topic in the project and argument.	<input type="checkbox"/> Annual theme is somewhat clear and connected to the topic in the project and argument.	<input type="checkbox"/> Annual theme has minimal clarity and the connection to the topic in the project and argument is unclear.	<input type="checkbox"/>

### What’s Next?

We are working on tools to help teachers, students, and judges become more familiar with the rubric and how to use it. Look for these tools by early December.

### Special Thanks

Thank you to all of the students, teachers, judges, and coordinators who provided valuable feedback on the rubric. Thank you also to the revision task force: Sarah Aschbrenner, Kate Melchior, Chris Stewart, Andrew Bedell, Brandice Nelson, Amy Federman, and Linda Abood.