

FIVE KEYS TO HISTORY DAY SUCCESS

Danny Corbett of Copperas Cove Junior High offered the following observations at a History Day workshop for his fellow teachers, and has graciously agreed to let us republish them. We thought they might also be useful for students and parents as well.

1. TEACHER INVOLVEMENT/ PARENT SUPPORT

Teachers need to be involved in the students' projects, guiding them along the way. Don't just assign the project and wait for the final product-you'll probably be disappointed. Get other teachers and staff members at your school involved. Ask for their input. Have them read over a paper, watch a performance, etc. Parent support is also very important. Parents can provide funding for project materials, transportation to libraries and contests, and guidance to the student.

2. TOPIC SELECTION

Assist students in selecting a topic. Judges want to see something unique or different that is well researched. Some topics are overdone. Make sure it is a topic that fits the annual theme. Although the theme is broad, students sometimes want to select something that does not address the theme, and then stretch to make it fit.

3. RESEARCH

Teachers need to stress research using primary source materials in researching projects. The quality and quantity of sources cited in the bibliography are important. Use all available resources, including public libraries, college libraries, archival sources, etc. Take kids to the local college library or special archival collections.

4. TIME

Spend time with students throughout their History Day experience. Teachers can

schedule time for them after school or on Saturdays. Encourage additional work at home.

5. POLISH

Work with students to put the finishing touches on their project. Use creativity with exhibits or performances. Make sure papers have good, thoughtful introductions and hard-hitting conclusions. Assist students in using technology with their documentaries.