

## A GUIDE TO SOCIAL STUDIES FAIR PROJECTS

This portion of the Social Studies Fair Bulletin is intended to identify key elements in a social studies project, describes how those elements should be developed, and offer incidental information for teachers and students about how to initiate, develop, and present a social studies fair project.

The information in this part of the Bulletin is intended for teachers, students, fair committee members, and judges. Since teachers are an essential resource in the development of social studies fair projects, it is important that they have proper, accurate information about fair projects to share with their students. Students can use this portion of the guide to help avoid wasted time and reduce their frustration in the development of fair projects. Fair committee members must respond to many questions from both teachers and students about the social studies fair so the information here can help them respond easily and accurately to inquiries and questions. Finally, the information within this section can be of use to judges who must decide which project, among many, is most worthy of recognition.

### THE BASICS OF A SOCIAL STUDIES FAIR PROJECT

The development of every social studies fair project should consider these things:

- A. A topic
- B. A physical display
- C. A research paper
- D. An oral presentation

#### Selecting a topic:

In selecting and identifying a topic for use in a social studies fair project several things should be kept in mind. It is essential that the student topic establish some relationship to man. The topic and project should be distinctly related to the social sciences and history. Beware of the overlap that can occur with a topic. For example, a student might select a topic related to Native Americans. Depending on the topic treatment, the project could apply to any number of disciplines. The project could examine the history of Native Americans (history), how they earned their living (economics), their customs (anthropology), how they lived together (sociology), government policy toward Native Americans (political science) or where they lived (geography). It is important that the student make it very clear that the topic and its treatment are distinctly related to the discipline chosen for the competition.

Students must avoid the use of topics that are clearly related to pure science areas. For example, the study of geology should not be confused with geography and dinosaurs should not be included in a project unless there is a clear relationship to humans.

The best way for a student to select a topic is to identify something about which they are curious; students always have questions about many different topics, subjects, events, people, and places. The student should identify one of these or anything else that may pique their curiosity, then contemplate the subject matter.

In considering a topic, remember: