

The JUDGING INTERVIEW: Why and What to Expect

Purpose of Interview:

- (1) Determine whether students actually created project
- (2) Determine student depth and sophistication of understanding
- (3) Give students an opportunity to show off their projects

Advice:

- Expect 3 judges
- Expect at least 3 question from the judges
- Use judge questions as an opportunity:
 - TALKING POINTS—have a plan of 3-5 key points you absolutely want to reinforce in interview
 - Reinforce thesis & main arguments w/ special emphasis on theme, context & significance
 - highlight the strengths of your project especially great research (primary sources; interviews)
 - demonstrate your sophisticated understanding & complex analysis
 - add information that you didn't include in your project
 - show your enthusiasm
- If in a group:
 - Expect to be fairly democratic in who speaks, 1 person should not dominate
 - Build off each other's points (but don't contradict)
- Some advice on judging:
 - (1) Review your project, your paperwork and your talking points before you go into the interview. Go in with a plan.
 - (2) Specific information for when it is your time to go is as follows:
 - For Exhibits, Papers & Websites:
 - The judges will have scrutinized your project ahead of time and your interview will be private (with only the judges)
 - When you meet your judges, SMILE, look each in the eye, and say, "Good Morning"
 - While being interviewed, maintain good posture, always SMILE and WOW them with your thoughtful, insightful responses to their very interested questions.
 - When you're done, shake each judge's hand and say, "Thank You" with a SMILE
 - For Documentaries & Performances:
 - You present your project to the judges and an audience but your interview will be with judges only
 - When you enter, immediately deliver your paperwork to the judges. Hand 1 copy of your paperwork to each judge, make eye contact, SMILE, and say, "Good Morning"
 - If you have a documentary, ask at this time if you can do a test and sound check.
 - While judges are perusing your paperwork, set up your project
 - For Docs-do test & sound check, adjust volume as appropriate
 - For Performances-get all your set pieces in place
 - Once you are set up, stand front and center of the judges with good posture, SMILE, and wait. Let the judges take their time soaking up your very impressive paperwork. The more time they take the better.
 - When the judges tell you they are ready, introduce yourself or yourselves (each individual saying his/her own name) and the last student to introduce him/herself also says, "Please enjoy our documentary/performance, titled _____." (Everyone is SMILING.)
 - Present your project
 - For docs, get the lights, start the DVD player and sit down out of the way.
 - For performances, proceed to your opening positions, stop, take a deep breath, settle yourselves, get into character then proceed.
 - Once your presentation is ended, stand front and center of the judges with good posture, smiling and WOW them with your thoughtful, insightful responses to their very interested questions.
- The keys to good interviewing are preparation and confidence. Preparation is being familiar with your project and paperwork and having talking points ready. Confidence is dress, smile, posture and knowing that you have done something that you're proud of. Every single project has a really good chance of winning.
- Remember, judging is very subjective. It makes Olympic Figure Skating scoring look like arithmetic. There is only so much you can do and the system is not always fair. The best you can do is RELAX and treat the whole thing as an OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW OFF. If you win, great! You get to keep working on your project and compete again later. If you don't win, keep it in perspective. This whole thing isn't about the competition anyway & you have a great deal of which to be proud.

Common Judge Questions:

- Tell us something about your project you'd like us to know.
- What was your most valuable resource and why?
- How is your topic related to the theme?
- How did your topic influence history? Why is it significant?
- What changed because of your topic? (Use theme words)
 - Relationship questions:
 - How did your topic impact _____?
 - How was your topic affected by _____?
 - How does your topic relate to _____?
- Where did you get your sources?
- How did your ideas about your topic change as you did your research?
- What was the greatest challenge you faced in your research?
- What was something you learned that didn't make it into the project?
- What conclusions have you drawn from your research?
- How has this project been a valuable learning experience for you? (Emphasize growth in skills especially critical thinking)
- How did you choose your topic?
- Why did you choose your category? (paper, exhibit, doc, performance, website)
- In your research, what did you learn that surprised you?
- How does your topic connect to today?
- Why is it important for people to know about this?
- If you qualify for the state competition, what would you do to your project between now and then?
- (If Group) How did your group members divide up your work?
- (Questions related to topic)