

National History Teacher of the Year Rubric

Teachers being considered for National History Teacher of the Year are evaluated based on three key areas:

- Leadership in the field of American history
- Creativity and imagination in the classroom
- Effective use of primary sources

For each of these areas, each teacher should be assigned a score of 1-4 based on their submitted materials. These areas will be weighted, with Leadership in the field of American history being worth 30% of the final score, Creativity and imagination in the classroom worth 40%, and Effective use of primary sources worth 30%.

We have provided the excellent category of each of the areas for your reference. We are interested in honoring a wide range of history teachers from different backgrounds who work in different settings. We would encourage you to submit your materials, even if you think you might not meet every one of the criteria described.

Leadership in the field of American history

Excellent (4)

Demonstrates a strong commitment to the study of American history outside the classroom. This can include but is not limited to

- Active member in one or more social studies/American history organizations
- Active involvement in the historical community
- Acts as an advocate or agent of change for the study of American history outside the classroom

Examples of excellent leadership from past years include

- *Presented at local, state, and national educational conference programs to promote historical thinking*
 - *Active membership in the Pennsylvania Council for the Social Studies and National Council for the Social Studies*
 - *Organized and trained teachers to integrate a new hardcover book unit in the curriculum*
 - *Obtained grant funding to support their students in cleaning up the oldest African American cemetery in Washington, DC*
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Creativity and imagination in the classroom

Excellent (4)

Demonstrates creativity and imagination in the classroom to excite and engage students. This can include but is not limited to

- Uses a wide variety of creative teaching methods including role play, debate, etc. to encourage learning and spark curiosity.
- Incorporates enriching and authentic cultural experiences to enhance American history instruction, such as expert speakers or field trips to highlight multiple perspectives and “forgotten history.”
- Demonstrates a sensitivity and understanding of the student population they are serving, and provides instruction that meets their needs.
- Uses teaching methods that allow students to make a personal connection to understand the importance of history on their everyday lives.
- Encourages students to become globally aware, responsible student-citizens, self-directed learners, and practical problem solvers, highlighting the importance of a student’s role in today’s society.

Examples of excellent demonstration of creativity and imagination in the classroom from past years include

- *Encouraging students to study the origins of a highway in their town to learn that it was actually an old historic trail, and advocate for renaming the highway*
 - *Organizing a student trip to rural Mississippi to volunteer at Habitat for Humanity to understand the depths of poverty and inequality in the Mississippi Delta.*
 - *Encouraging students to interview individuals who lived in Washington DC during the 1968 riots to create an oral history project encompassing different perspectives and experiences*
 - *Using “escape room” games such as lockboxes and clues to encourage historical thinking*
 - *Encouraging students to research local historical figures of color to better understand the history of their community.*
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Effective use of primary sources

Excellent (4)

Demonstrates an effective use of a wide range of primary sources. This can include but is not limited to

- Uses documents, artifacts, historic sites, oral histories, and other primary sources to engage students and highlight multiple perspectives, including the voices of people of color, indigenous people, and women
- Encourages the use of primary sources in lessons and research assignments allowing students to interact with history using first-hand accounts
- Demonstrates the ability to teach primary sources using structured pedagogy that include having students work directly with primary sources in a variety of intentional ways to increase literacy and research skills to foster academic independence

Examples of the excellent use of primary sources from past years include

- *Placing “clues” in a variety of primary source documents to encourage students to read and analyze each document for their importance in the historical puzzle*
 - *Encouraging students to study monuments and icons to understand Redeemers’ influence on African American rights after the Civil War*
 - *Using the Selective Service Act to have students actively participate in a WWII draft simulation.*
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