



The New York State Archives Student Research Awards provides an opportunity for individual, small group or whole class project-based learning. Students do in depth research using primary sources to create a project with a goal and a real-world audience. The judges feedback is encouraging and honest, helping students to grow as researchers.

Getting Started – Individual Project

1 Choosing a Topic

Helping your student find a topic that has strong primary sources can take a bit of work. Connecting with your town historian, local historical society or other repositories in your area is a great way to find sources and topics of local interest. This resource includes a list of online resources for your use.

2 Organize the Research

For elementary, helping the student find the primary sources will likely be needed. Most students do not yet know what kind of documents are available. Work with your student to search online and in person repositories.

Help the student to organize the documents in paper and/or digital folders. Provide the student with one copy of the Bibliography Note Catcher page for each document.

3 Choose a Project to Present the Research

The student will need to pick a way to present the research. A book, a play, a research paper, a podcast with interviews? The sky is the limit. Just be sure to check back to the requirements. As long as the project has the required pieces, it is possible. If you have any questions, email ARCHEDU@nysed.gov. As the student works through the research, periodic meetings to make further decisions and will be helpful.

4 Kick-Off the Project

Kick off the project with an engaging introduction. For example, if your topic is about a local building, group or people, take a field trip to get a firsthand introduction. Cemeteries make great field trips! Visit your local historian and ask for an overview of the topic.

As part of the introduction, introduce primary and secondary sources and do some lessons on what each is, as well as lessons on observing versus inferring. The New York State Archives Partnership Trust *Jr!* Magazine is a great resource for this.

5 The Hard Work Begins!

Now it is time to get down to the hard work! While the student does this research, you may need to provide some guidance to keep the project on track.

Introducing the Bibliography Note Catcher beforehand will save much frustration. Use a document not related to the project to guide your students through this process. The Bibliography Note Catcher will save time and frustration when it comes time to put together the Annotated Bibliography that is required for contest entries.

6

Keeping Track

Some students may need some help keeping track of all the parts of the project. For example, if the student is going to present the research in book format, keeping track of research, written work, illustrations and annotated bibliography takes a bit of work. Creating a spread sheet listing the parts they need to complete can be a big help!

7

Putting It All Together

Once the student has finished the research and created the parts needed for their project, it is time to put it all together. At the elementary level it is appropriate for an adult to help students with some aspects, such as uploading text and images, securing and using a video camera or having items copied or printed. Students need to create all the content.

8

Annotated Bibliography

All entries must include an annotated bibliography. Each source (primary or secondary) must be listed in correct APA or Chicago style, and include an annotation. In the annotation students must explain how the source was useful in their research. Judges will be looking for deeper level thinking. For example, stating “This document talked about the trip John Doe took,” would not be as favorable as “This document explained the trip John Doe took. On that trip he saw how the factories were polluting the rivers. Joe Doe wrote a letter to the editor of his local paper protesting the pollution. We used this document to support our ideas about why John Doe became an environmentalist.”

Online Sources for Primary Documents

- Consider the Source New York - <https://www.considerthesourcenyny.org>
- New York Public Library Digital Collections - <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org>
- New York Heritage - <https://nyheritage.org>
- Library of Congress Digital Collections - <https://www.loc.gov/research-centers/main/collections/digital-collections/>
- Fulton History Historic Newspapers - <https://fultonhistory.com/Fulton.html>
- Ancestry.com -New York Records are free to those who live in New York. This site explains how: <https://www.newyorkfamilyhistory.org/blog/how-get-free-access-select-ancestrycom-new-york-records>