

**Cherokee County School  
District  
Social Studies Fair Guide  
Grades 5-12**



**20010-2011**

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# Social Studies Fair Requirements/Regulations

1. Projects may be entered by individual students or by groups of up to three students from Grades 5-12. The names of all students must be on the entry form. Group projects will be judged in the Class corresponding to the highest grade level represented by members of the group and in competition with individual projects.

**Class I   Grades 5-6**  
**Class II   Grades 7-8**  
**Class III   Grades 9-10**  
**Class IV   Grades 11-12**

2. Projects are limited to a space of **30 inches front to back (depth), 48 inches in width (when opened), and 60 inches in height. (Additional support equipment may be placed under the table, but not at the sides.)** Entries will be placed on display tables according to class levels and disciplines. After all entry forms have been received by the state fair director and the final list of contestants has been published for the state fair, the classification of a project in a particular discipline cannot be changed.

3. If a project includes audio or video recording, slides, computers, or a combination of these audiovisual media, the total listening/viewing time **may not exceed ten minutes**. Audio media should be presented in such a way that it is not distracting to its neighboring projects

4. All projects must be accompanied by a research summary paper of approximately four or five double-spaced typed pages. The summary paper should give the question being explored, methodology, and conclusions of the project. The summary paper must also include bibliographic references. If direct citations are to be used in the summary paper, the proper footnotes should be included.

5. An abstract of the project should be included on a **3" x 5"** card. Information on the abstract provides a succinct description of the project, including the title, statement of problem or question, methodology, and conclusion. Students should give this card to the judges at the beginning of the oral interview.

6. The visual presentation must include the following components on a backboard:
  - Clear statement of the question being studied (may be stated as hypothesis, question, or purpose);
  - Methodology (procedures used in the research);
  - Visuals that illustrate or enhance the research findings; and Conclusion(s), based on analysis and interpretation of data that directly answer the question being studied

# Steps in Preparing for the School Fair

## Faculty Orientation

In past years, involvement of the faculty in social studies project development has been accomplished in several ways:

- Advanced studies and other individual social studies teachers assign projects as part of their coursework;
- Interdisciplinary teams work together to teach and coach students in the aspects of the projects related to their content areas;
- Gifted program collaborative teams of teachers contract with students to complete projects related to content area courses; and
- Vertical teams of teachers (Elementary, Middle, and High School Honors teachers) scaffold the steps in project development over 2-3 years.

Whether a principal, a team of teachers, or an individual teacher decides to require or make the opportunity available to students, all personnel involved should meet to discuss dates and guidelines, to determine the tasks to be accomplished, and to delegate responsibility for each task.

## Student Orientation

As a first step in the instruction process, students should receive an orientation to the purpose, components, and steps in the process of the development of social studies fair projects particular to the GCSS social studies fairs. Required components include a research summary paper, a visual presentation, an abstract, and an interview with at least one of the students involved in the development of the project.

## Selection of Topics/Research Questions

Supervising teachers should lead students in the selection of a well-defined social studies topic that is neither too limited nor too broad. Although the *title* of the project is not required to be in question form, the formulation of a research question that clearly defines the focus of the project is the first step in the research process. The research question must be discussed in the summary paper and appear on the project board. All data in the paper and on the project board should relate to the answer to the question (conclusion). Topics should clearly fall within one of the social studies disciplines. The discipline must be identified on the official entry form that accompanies the project throughout all levels of competition.

## **Confirming the Plans**

Once the student has identified a particular topic for exploration and formulated a research question, a “contract” listing all requirements, benchmarks, deadlines, and the research question may be issued by the teacher and signed by the student and parents.

## **Establishing Methodology**

Establishing and implementing a research methodology is another required component of the project and must be reported in the summary paper and on the project board. Methodology includes the steps in gathering, analyzing, and interpreting the data needed to answer the research question, and **does not include steps in writing the paper or constructing the display**.

## **Collecting, Analyzing, and Interpreting the Data**

Once an appropriate methodology has been established, students may begin using the selected processes and instruments to collect information related to the research question. Data should first be organized in some logical format. Charts, tables and other graphic organizers may be used to record information in a form that clarifies the relationship of the data. Once the data is organized, students may use critical thinking processes to interpret the data and make inferences that lead to a conclusion.

## **Writing Summary Papers and Abstracts**

When a sufficient amount of information to reach a conclusion has been analyzed and interpreted, the student should write a draft of the research summary paper. Teachers should review the draft, and students should make revisions and corrections, if needed.

The abstract, which should be written on a 3 X 5 card after the summary paper is completed, will be given to the judges by the student to use as an overview at the beginning of the interview.

## **Preparing for the Interview**

Students may prepare for the interview by having teachers or parents practice with them. Students should be able to give a brief overview of the development of their project and should be prepared to answer questions about importance of their topic, methodology, sources, research findings, and conclusion. Often judges will ask students to explain their reasons for choosing the topic, to evaluate their work (suggest what might be done differently or additionally if the student were to do the project again), or to recommend what next steps could or should be taken regarding the topic.

## **Competition Day**

Teachers and parents should prepare students for competition day by making sure that all steps have been completed, that students are aware of the competition location and schedule, and that they have transportation. This is also an excellent opportunity to reinforce desirable character traits that will aid them in making the most of the experience and to advise students as to suitable attire and grooming for participating in competitive endeavors.

## **Judging Guidelines**

Selecting and preparing judges are critical factors to the success of the local, regional, and state fairs. Judges should be chosen for their ability to empathize with students as well as for their knowledge of content. Judges should be given the criteria in advance. In addition, an orientation session should be held prior to the judging. At this session, the importance of helping students relax and feel good about participating in the fair should be stressed. It is recommended that the judges be persons experienced in social studies. Local college teachers, social studies coordinators, school administrators, publisher representatives, and teachers may serve as judges.

**Note: Teachers from schools submitting projects should not be used as judges in the classes (I, II, III, IV) corresponding to the entries from their school.**

## **Checklist of Questions for Planning School Fairs**

1. Who is the social studies fair coordinator for the system?
2. When and where will the system competition be held?
3. How many projects may advance from the school to the system fair?
4. Who will be the chairperson of the school fair?
5. When and where will the school fair be held?
6. What are the tasks necessary to implement the fair?
7. Who will do each task?
8. What is the process and timeline for reporting to other social studies fair committee members?
9. How will project development be reflected in lesson plans as addressing GPS (Georgia Performance Standards)?
10. Is there a particular contract format that all students in the school will be using?
11. What content area teachers and support personnel (art, technology, media, language arts, and math) are needed to mentor students?
12. How will the mentors know what is needed from them?
13. How will students obtain needed materials (home, community contributions)?
14. Who will pay for awards?
15. Who will take care of publicity?



## Example of Past Projects





## **Guidelines for Students Selecting a Topic**

### **Avoid topics that are limited.**

Example: *What crops are grown in our county?* A student cannot write a report on a topic that can be explained in a few words or a sentence.

Better topic: *What is the economic impact of peanut production in our county?*

### **Avoid topics that are too broad.**

Example: *What happened during the Civil War?*

Topics which are too big make it impossible to find all the information that is needed to cover the topic adequately.

Better Topic: *The Role of (name of a local historical figure, place or event) in the Civil War*

### **Avoid topics that have no available information.**

Example: *Why did Henry Hudson get into trouble with the crew of his ship?*  
We often do not know exactly why people did what they did in the past.

### **Avoid topics that are confusing because we cannot tell what specific information is being requested.**

Example: *What do people of Japan like?*

We know that the people of Japan may differ in their likes and dislikes.

Better topic: *A Comparison of Japanese women and American women in sports competition*

### **Avoid topics on which people throughout the world cannot agree.**

Example: *What is the most powerful country in the world?*

The topic should be supported with facts. The facts are used to arrive at a conclusion.

Better topic: *Why might Japan be considered one of the strongest economic powers in the world?*

## **Descriptions of Social Studies Disciplines**

### **Anthropology**

Anthropology is the scientific study of human beings from prehistory to contemporary societies. It includes all aspects of human development, both physical and cultural. The field of archeology is the study of humanity through fossils and artifacts. The field of physical anthropology deals with the biological development of humans. The field of cultural anthropology studies the ways humans have devised to cope with their natural settings and social environments and how customs are learned, retained, and handed down from one generation to another.

### **Economics**

Economics is the scientific study of the production and exchange of goods and services. The economist analyzes the data, issues, and public policies related to the production, distribution, and consumption of scarce resources. The economist describes the economic system in an effort to explain how people satisfy their wants and needs. The economic behavior of humans is concerned with methods of doing business, producing, organizing (labor and management), financing, and regulating economic activities.

### **Geography**

Geography deals with Earth's surface, the utilization of raw materials and resources, and human behavior as it is influenced by location and other geographic factors. Geography is the scientific study of the relationship between the physical environment and human activities. Geography deals with the description of the earth's surface, the changes that occur in it, the knowledge of its various parts (land, water, and atmosphere), and the theories of its formation and change.

### **History**

History encompasses all that has happened to humanity. History, in a narrower sense, can be limited to the history of a country (all that has happened in that country), or it can be limited to a group of people, and institution, a community, etc. History is more than a systematic record of events of the past, because it usually includes analysis and explanation of these events. History is the record of changes of civilizations.

### **Political Science**

Political science is the scientific study of the theory and practice of humanity in organizing and controlling the power necessary for group living. Different societies have different methods of human control. The process of government can be studied by description, through comparison and classification of political data. Political science includes the art, science, and philosophy of the governmental process.

### **Sociology/Psychology**

Group living is the result of humanity's social needs and necessitates cooperation within and between groups. Groups are constantly changing in nature and functions because personality, attitudes, motivation, and behavior of individuals both influence and are influenced by social groups. Therefore, individual adjustment to group living is constantly necessary.

## Social Studies Fair Contract and Timeline

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Research Question\_\_\_\_\_

Supervising Social Studies Teacher\_\_\_\_\_

Parent's/Guardian's Name\_\_\_\_\_

By signing below, my child and I have agreed that he/she will complete a project for the Social Studies Fair. We realize that doing the project will require work hours beyond the school day. We also acknowledge that the research paper portion of the project is required coursework to achieve the existing state curriculum objectives, and the teacher is responsible for providing instruction on project development.

*Parent/Guardian Signature*

.....

*Student*

*Signature*.....

...

August 25 Topic Due with Signed Contract

September 3 Topic Question/Thesis Statement Due

October 1 Bibliography & Outline Due

October 15 Rough Draft Due

October 22 Final Draft of Paper and Project Board Due

October 27-29 E.T. Booth Social Studies Fair

November 16 County Social Studies Fair

## Research Summary Paper Format

### 1. Folder and Cover Page

The paper should be bound in a folder with a cover page, which clearly presents the name of the project, student name(s), school name, grade level, and the name of teacher. The cover should add to the overall aesthetic appearance of the project display. The paper should be placed on the table in front of the backboard.

### 2. Verification/Presentation Format

Reports must be typed and printed. Should the report be typed by someone other than the student, include the following statement **on the title page or on a page immediately following**:

"I verify that this paper, typed by \_\_\_\_\_, is exactly as I prepared it."

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature

Credit should also be given to anyone who has provided assistance in the preparation of the project on the same page.

### 3. Body of Summary Paper (4-5 double-spaced typed pages)

- The **Statement of the question being explored** clearly states why the research topic was chosen.
- The **Methodology** explains the steps in the research process—how data was systematically collected and analyzed.
- The **Research findings** include adequate and balanced information in a sequential and convincing manner.
- The **Conclusion** presents a summary of the key idea and answers the question being explored.

### 4. Bibliography/References

Supervising teachers may require MLA, APA, or any other traditional documentation style when listing references and giving credit within the summary paper. The supervising teacher should provide guidelines from a reliable source, and the student should use the chosen style consistently throughout the paper. Sources for manuals for these guidelines are Modern Language Association and the American Psychological Association handbooks. Ordering information can be found online, and the handbooks may be available in your school media center or regional library.

A bibliography is required at all levels. It is recommended that schools/systems scaffold requirements for giving credit within the paper as students progress through the grade levels, with Class IV (Grades 11-12) using documentation skills that should be mastered before entering college.

## **Sample Abstract**

### **3 X 5 Index Card**

**Title:** Advertising and Fast Food: How Effective?

**Name(s):** John Jones and Mary Martin

**Statement of the Problem/Question:** The purpose of this project is to determine the effectiveness of fast food restaurant advertising.

**Methodology:** Surveys were submitted to 138 elementary students asking them to match advertising slogans to companies' names. Sales accounts were compared from five fast food restaurants for two months when advertisement "wars" were held.

**Conclusion(s):** Findings indicated that students matched the slogans and compared sales accounts correctly. The advertisements were determined to be effective.


## Georgia Social Studies Fair Judges' Score Sheet

(This scoring sheet should be used in judging all projects of all classes in local, regional and state fairs.)

### I. Statement of the Question Being Explored/Abstract (5 points)

*The project includes a/an*

- A. question/purpose that is clearly stated;
- B. question/purpose that is original or explores some new aspect of the topic;
- C. question/purpose that is neither too limited nor too broad;
- D. question/purpose that addresses a significant local, state, national or international social studies topic; and
- E. abstract that concisely states the project title, purpose, methodology, and conclusion(s).

  
 Judges,  
 please  
 enter points  
 in this column:

	Superlative	Good	Needs Improvement	Not Present	
na	1	0	0	0	_____
na	1	0	0	0	_____
na	1	0	0	0	_____
na	1	0	0	0	_____
na	1	0	0	0	_____

Section Total

### II. Summary Paper (30 points)

*The summary paper includes*

- A. a statement of the problem;
- B. development of the topic;
- C. interpretation of the topic;
- D. evidence of critical thinking (evaluation and interpretation of data);
- E. a logical conclusion that is well-developed and answers the question being explored;
- F. correct grammar;
- G. correct spelling;
- H. correct punctuation; and
- I. correct bibliographic style (APA, MLA, Turabian--as directed by the supervising teacher, based on local system curriculum requirements).

na	2	1	0	0	_____
5	4	3	0	0	_____
5	4	3	0	0	_____
5	4	3	0	0	_____
5	4	3	0	0	_____
na	2	1	na	na	_____
na	2	1	na	na	_____
na	2	1	na	na	_____
na	2	1	0	0	_____

Section Total

### III. Visual Display (25 points)

*The visual display includes/demonstrates*

- A. display of the question/purpose;
- B. display of the methodology;
- C. display of the conclusion;
- D. display of data/information that supports the conclusion;
- E. appropriate choice/correct use of media or format for presentation of data;
- F. a pleasing visual and/or auditory effect;
- G. conscientiousness of workmanship as manifested by accuracy, neatness, and craftsmanship;
- H. creativity or originality (including the absence of commercially prepared models) in the construction, arrangement and presentation of the materials;
- I. display and other media within size and time specifications;
- J. correct grammar;
- K. correct spelling; and
- L. correct punctuation.

na	1	0	0	0	_____
na	1	0	0	0	_____
na	1	0	0	0	_____
na	2	1	0	0	_____
5	4	3	0	0	_____
3	2	1	0	0	_____
3	2	1	0	0	_____
3	2	1	0	0	_____
na	3	0	0	0	_____
na	1	0	0	0	_____
na	1	0	0	0	_____
na	1	0	0	0	_____

Section Total

(continued)

## Georgia Social Studies Fair Judges' Score Sheet

	Superlative	Good	Needs Improvement	Not Present	
<b>IV. Oral Presentation (10 points)</b>					
<i>The student demonstrates</i>					
A. knowledge of the content, vocabulary and research process used in the development of this project;	5	4	3	0	
B. confidence, poise, and projection; and	2	1	0	0	
C. elaborative thinking as to how the research topic may be extended and refined.	3	2	1	0	
Section Total					

<b>V. Methodology (30 points)</b>					
<i>The project shows</i>					
A. in-depth investigation of adequate and reliable resources;	6	5	4	0	
B. sufficient data upon which to base conclusions;	6	5	4	0	
C. evidence of application of social studies skills (e.g., gathering and interpreting data, interpreting maps);	6	5	4	0	
D. relevance (all information related to the project question/purpose); and	6	5	4	0	
E. evidence of interpretation and analysis of data.	6	5	4	0	
Section Total					

**GRAND TOTAL** \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Student name(s): (1) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (2) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (3) \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Exhibit: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Discipline \_\_\_\_\_ Project Number \_\_\_\_\_

Region: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_ System: \_\_\_\_\_

Directing Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_