

SOCIAL STUDIES FAIR HANDBOOK

DEKALB COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM



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DeKalb County School System -2011-2012

DEKALB COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

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PARTICIPATION AND EVALUATION

Participation of schools in the local, county, regional, and state fairs is strongly encouraged, but not required by the Division of Teaching and Learning. Schools participating in the fair should establish local guidelines within the framework of the DeKalb Social Studies Fair Handbook. Projects submitted to the county fair and beyond should meet all requirements outlined in the handbook.

Individual fair projects should be developed for the purpose of extending and enriching social studies skills and concepts as stated in the curriculum. A sample rubric for evaluation of a project can be found in the Appendix.



CLASS CONFIGURATIONS

Class I – Grades 5 and 6
Class II – Grades 7 and 8

Class III – Grades 9 and 10
Class IV – Grades 11 and 12

REGULATIONS

Local, Regional and State Fairs Class I, Class II, Class III, Class IV

1. Entries in the regional and state fairs will be limited to grades 5 through 12. (At the discretion of the local school principal, projects from earlier grades may be entered in local fair only.) Projects may be entered by individual students or by groups consisting of no more than **THREE** students. The names of all students must be on the entry form. Group projects will be judged in their respective classes in competition with individual projects.
2. Projects are limited to a space of 30 INCHES FRONT TO BACK, 48 INCHES WIDE (when opened) AND 60 INCHES IN HEIGHT. (Additional support equipment may be placed under the table, but not in front of, or to the sides of the table.) Entries will be placed on display tables according to class levels and disciplines in regional and state fairs. Therefore, careful classification of the project in the appropriate discipline is critical.
3. If a project includes audio or video recordings, films, filmstrips, slides, computers, or a combination of these audio/visual media, the total listening/viewing time may not exceed 10 minutes. Students are responsible for securing the technology needed for audio or video needs.
4. At the county, regional, and state fairs, at least one student who worked on the project must be present to interpret the project. Students should be prepared to give a five- minute oral overview of the project for the judges. Students should also be prepared to answer questions posed by the judges during the project interview.
5. A summary paper of no more than 600 words must accompany all projects, approximately 4-5 double-spaced, typed pages. The summary paper should give the statement of the problem, methodology, a synopsis of the research, and the conclusion drawn as a result of the research. The report must include bibliographic references. If direct citations are to be used in the summary paper, the proper footnotes should be included.
6. An abstract of the project should be included on a 4"x6" card. Information on the abstract provides a description of project title, statement of the problem, methodology, and conclusion. (See sample in the Appendix.) Students shall give this card to the judges at the beginning of the oral interview.
7. The visual presentation shown on the backboard must include:
 - a clear statement of the question researched,
 - a clear statement of the purpose,
 - the methodology used for investigation,
 - visuals that directly relate to the question researched; and
 - conclusion(s) based on research.

8. The director of the fair will instruct the judges to deduct points from projects that violate rules #2, #3, #4, and #5.
9. The project must be constructed strong enough not to fall apart when moved. Clearly worded instructions should be placed on any project that requires special operation. Explanatory matter should be kept to a minimum, but must be provided by the exhibitor as needed.
10. The exhibitor must furnish all equipment such as extension cords, bulbs, projectors, recorders, monitors, etc. The exhibitor must also make provisions to secure such equipment to the tables.

Each exhibitor is responsible for setting up the project for display and must remove the project at the required time. At the county, regional, and state fairs, projects should be left on display until appropriate publicity photographs have been made and sufficient time has been given for additional viewing. Projects left at the local, region, and state fairs beyond removal time will be discarded.

SOCIAL STUDIES DISCIPLINES

The following descriptions of the social studies disciplines are guidelines to help place projects in the correct categories:

Anthropology is the study of human beings from prehistory to contemporary societies. It includes all aspects of human development, both physical development and cultural heritage. Anthropology includes many diverse branches of the study of humanity and its social adaptations. The field is so broad that anthropologists are specialists in some branch. Archeology is the study of humanity through fossils and artifacts. Physical anthropology deals with the biological development of humans. 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 is the study of the production and exchange of goods produced by humanity. 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 these activities.

Geography is the study of the earth's surface, humanity's utilization of raw materials and resources, and human behavior as influenced by location and other geographic factors. Geography is the study of the relationship between the physical environment and human activities. A geographer describes 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 encompasses all that has happened to humanity. History in a narrower sense can be limited to the history of a country (all that happened in that country), or it can be limited to a group of people, an 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 is the 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.

Sociology is the study of humanity's social needs that necessitate cooperation within and between groups. Groups are constantly changing in nature and function because personality, attitudes, motivation, and behavior of individuals both influence and are influenced by social groups. The sociologists study the development, structure, interaction and collective behavior of organized groups of human beings.

TIMELINE

Notice of Intent to Participate (via SurveyMonkey)	September 9, 2011
Establish Local Fair Date	September 16, 2011
Local School Fair- held by	November 18, 2011
Names of winners due to District Office* (via FirstClass to Karen Lewis)	November 30, 2011
DeKalb County Fair (Tucker High School)	December 10, 2011

Activity	Saturday, Dec. 10
Set up projects/Judges orientation	8:00am-9:00am
Projects Interviews	9:00am-12:00pm
Judges Deliberation	12:00pm-2:00pm
Awards Ceremony/Public Viewing of projects	2:00pm-3:00pm
Remove projects	3:00pm

All projects must be removed after the Awards' Ceremony

East Metro Region Social Studies Fair
DeKalb County School System (Arabia Mountain High School) February 11, 2011

Georgia State Social Studies Fair
TBA

***Entries submitted after November 30, 2011 will not be accepted.**

TIPS FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

1. Go over all information regarding the social studies project with your child. If you have any questions, contact the teacher who distributed the information.
2. Help your child choose a topic and be supportive of his or her final decision.
3. Allow your child time for thinking, exploring, and preparing his or her project.
4. Help your child by:
 - driving him or her to the library
 - helping to arrange interviews
 - providing suggestions as to sources of information
 - helping to create and compile surveys
 - proofreading and revising letters requesting information and/or materials
 - gathering printed materials related to your child's project
 - making suggestion for backboard design improvement
 - assisting in model construction
 - practicing interview and presentation skills
5. Remember, you are encouraged to assist your child in the completion of his or her social studies project. The operative word is assist. If the social studies project is to be a true learning experience for your child, it is imperative that the child does the work.
6. Proofread all material.
7. Be aware that your child may need assistance in delivering projects to and from school.
8. Attend the county social studies fair with your child. Take pictures and make notes for future projects.
9. Attend the Awards Ceremony. Take your child's project home.

SELECTING A TOPIC

The most important step in preparing a research paper is choosing a good topic. Select a topic that is included within the six social studies disciplines. Use the guidelines below in choosing your topic.

1. Avoid topics that are limited.

Example: How many states are in the United States?

A student cannot write a report on a topic that can be explained in a few words or a sentence.

Better topic: "What valuable resources are found in the southern states?"

2. Avoid topics that are too broad.

Example: What happened during the Vietnam War?

Topics that are too big make it impossible to condense all the information to cover the topic adequately.

Better topic: How did America become involved in the Vietnam War?

3. Some topics 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.

4. Avoid topics that are confusing because we cannot tell what information is requested.

Example: What do people of Japan like?

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

Better topic: What are the favorite sports of the people of Japan?

5. Avoid topics on which people throughout the world cannot agree.

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

Your topic should be supported with facts. You should use these facts to form your own opinions.

Better topic: Why is Japan considered the strongest economic power in the world?

EXAMPLES OF TOPICS FOR PROJECT IDEAS

Anthropology

"How to Dress? Changing Rights and Responsibilities of Muslim Women."

"Who Are the Aborigine of Australia and How Has Their Culture Survived?"

"Who Were the Earliest Citizens of Georgia?"

Economics

"How Does Advertising Affect the Spending Habits of Fifth Grade Students at Our School?"

"Are America's Elderly Facing Cost Catastrophe?"

"How Do You Finance A War?"

"What Would Be the Economic Impact of Prohibition of the Sale of Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products?"

Geography

"Who Are the Palestinians?"

"What Do You Know About Liberia?"

"What Happens to the Town When the Factory Closes?"

"What Does Drought Mean to the State of Georgia?"

History

History

How Much Do You Know About Your School's History?"

"Our Georgia Flag: How Did it Evolve?"

"Is Truth a Defense? John Peter Zenger and Freedom of the Press"

"How Did Jackie Robinson Change Baseball?"

Political Science

"Is America the World Policeman?"

"Voter Apathy: How Does It Affect Election Results?"

"How did 'Bloody Sunday' Impact the Civil Rights Movement?"

"Have Seat Belt Laws Made a Difference?"

Sociology

"The Right to Die: Whose Choice?"

"How Does Divorce Affect Children?"

"I am Hungry: Where Can I Go to Get Help?"

"Capital Punishment: Is It the Answer?"

Television Violence: Who Decides and How?"

WRITING THE RESEARCH QUESTION

Student Name: _____ Teacher: _____

Section I



Question: _____

Discipline: _____

Teacher Suggestions: _____

Section II



Rewritten Question: _____

Discipline: _____

Teacher Approval: _____

Section III

How do you plan to answer this question?

Teacher Suggestions: _____

Parent Signature _____

Date _____

WRITING THE THESIS STATEMENT

A thesis statement is a sentence (or sentences) that expresses the main ideas of your paper and answers the question or questions posed by your paper. It offers your readers a quick and easy to follow summary of what the paper will be discussing and what you as a writer are setting out to tell them.

SELECTING RESOURCE MATERIALS

In this era of information selecting resource materials can be an overwhelming task. Resources are available at the public library, the Internet, books, magazines, newspapers, encyclopedias (books and/or software) and interviews. One suggestion is to start by reading the information available in the encyclopedia. This general overview of the topic can help the writer determine if the topic of the paper is interesting.

No matter which resource materials are used, it is critical to give credit to the person or people who authored the work. Plagiarism is rampant due largely to the convenience of gathering information from the Internet. Students need instructional support from teachers and parents to avoid the temptation of copying someone else's work.

CREATING AN OUTLINE

Making an outline will make writing easier. You can use it as a plan for your writing. An outline helps you sort out your main ideas and the facts that support them. These facts and ideas are on the note cards you filled out while doing your research. This outline will help plan the best order for your ideas. An outline has several parts, main topics, and subtopics. A main topic starts with a Roman numeral and a period. A main topic tells a main idea. A subtopic starts with a capital letter and a period. Subtopics give supporting details that tell about the main topic. They are always listed under the main topic. An outline also has a title.

BIBLIOGRAPHY CARDS

The purpose of the working bibliography card is two-fold. First, it lists the bibliographical information, that is, the information that identifies the specific resource. Second, it gives a summary of the information within the source.

Example: Front Side includes resource location information and bibliographic information

If using a book or other resource from the library or media center, list the call numbers

Dewey Decimal #REF 810.9 LIT

Martin, Wendy. "Emily Dickinson." Columbia Literary History

This chapter contains some of Emily Dickinson's life experiences which influenced her views of death in her poetry.

may be helpful to your topic

EXAMPLES OF BIBLIOGRAPHIC CITATIONS

Book with a single author

Author's last name, author's first name. Title of the book. Place of publication:
Publisher's name, date of publication.

Fradin, Dennis B. Georgia in Words and Pictures. Chicago: Children's Press, 1981.

Book with more than one author

Visher, Emily B. and John S. Bennett. Stepfamilies: A Guide to Working with Stepparents and Stepchildren. New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1979.

Book with an editor (no author listed)

Editor's last name, first name, editor's title. Name of the book. Place of publication: Publisher's name, date of publication.

Bender, David L., series editor. Censorship. St. Paul: Greenhaven Press, 1985.

Book with no author listed

Title of the book. Place of publication: Publisher's name, date of publication.

The World Almanac and Book of Facts. New York: Newspaper Enterprises Association, Inc., 1989.

Encyclopedia article - signed

Author's last name, author's first name. "Title of article." Name of encyclopedia. Volume number, page number. Place of publication: Name of publisher, date of publication.

Griffey, Thomas A. "Noise." World Book Encyclopedia. Vol. 14, p. 455. Chicago: World Book, 1989.

Encyclopedia article - unsigned

"Title of article." Name of encyclopedia. Volume number, page number. Place of publication: Name of publisher, date of publication.

Magazine article with an author listed

Author's last name, author's first name. "Title of the article." Name of the magazine. Date of magazine, pages of the article.

Warner, Margaret Garrard. "A Class of American Diplomacy?" Newsweek. Oct. 30, 1989, pp. 62-63.

Magazine article with no author listed

"Title of article." Name of magazine. Date of magazine, page number.

"Education at Home: A Showdown in Texas." Life. March, 1985, p. 87.

Newspaper article - signed

Author's last name, author's first name. "Title of article." Name of newspaper. Date of article, section, page number.

Keen, Judy. "Relief Pouring into Bay Area." USA Today. Oct. 23, 1989, Sec. A, p. 1.

Newspaper article - unsigned

"Title of article." Name of newspaper. Date of article, section, page number.

"Amazing Amazon Region." New York Times. Jan. 12, 1981, Sec. B, p. 11.

Pamphlet

"Name of Pamphlet." Agency. Place of publication: Name of publisher, date of publication.

"Velvetbean Caterpillar." The Dept. of Agriculture. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960.

Personal interview

Person's last name, person's first name. Company name or occupation. Place of interview, date of interview.

Email

Author of email. Subject line of the message. [Online] Available email: Student@adress.edu from Author@address.edu, date of document download.

Rule, Christopher. Nile River Research Project results. [Online] Available mail: student5@smallvillehigh.edu from ert @informns.k12.mm.us, October 2, 1999.

World Wide Web

Author. Title of item. [Online] Available <http://address/filename>, date of document or download.

Schwartz, Robert. The Cold War Revisited: A Splintered USSR. [Online] Available <http://usa.coldwar.serve.gov/index/cold.war/countries/former.soviet.block/>, November 1, 1998.

Online Newspaper Article

Pressley, S. (1999, Jan. 6). Miami's Cubans find good in easing of restrictions [19 paragraphs]. The Washington Post [Online]. Available: [http://](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/longterm/cuba/cuba.htm)

www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/longterm/cuba/cuba.htm [1999, Jan. 6].

Online Images

Description or title of image. [Online Image] Available <http://address/filename>. Date of document or download.

Hubble Space Telescope release in the Space Shuttle's Payload Bay. [Online Image] Available <ftp://explorer.arc.nasa.gov/pub/SPACE/GIF/s31-04-015.gif>, October 23, 1998.

NOTE TAKING

Note taking is a shortcut for writing down information you have read and want to remember. You use these notes to help write a report. When you take notes, write down key words that will help you recall information. Write notes in your own words on index cards. You are now ready to organize your research by arranging your note cards in sequential order. When taking notes, skim the material first to get a general idea of the content. Read them a second time and read more carefully in order to find the main points and details. Be sure to color code your sources and include page numbers on each note card.

WRITING THE RESEARCH PAPER

Prewriting

Think about purpose and audience - Ask these questions. What do I want the reader to learn? How much detail should I include? Who will the reader be? What facts need explanation?

Write a First Draft

Write your first draft. Remember to follow your outline. Write on every other line to leave room for changes. Write down all your facts without stopping to correct spelling and grammar. Save those changes for later.

Revising

Revising Checklist:

Will the opening make the reader want to know more?

Does each paragraph begin with a topic sentence?

Have I included details that support my main ideas?

Have I explained each fact clearly?

Does the closing sum up the report?

1. Revise - Make changes in your first draft. Make your sentences interesting to your readers. A thesaurus can help you find clearer words.
2. Have another person read your report. Ask for suggestions.
3. Revise - Can you use any of the suggestions made by the person who read your paper? Do you have other ideas? Make those changes on your paper.

Proofreading (from <http://www.researchpaper.com>)

It is always difficult to find errors in one's own work. The words and sentences appear correct on rereading because if the writer had known better, he would not have made the errors in the first place! But a careful rereading of a paper aloud before it is turned in helps considerably. Perhaps a checklist of common errors will serve you as a guide. Keep this list and a grammar book before you as you read your paper over, checking every sentence for these items.

Run-on Sentences and Sentence Fragments

...Check each sentence to make sure it has a subject and verb and complete thought.

...Have you run two sentences together incorrectly with neither period, conjunction or semicolon

separating them?

Punctuation

...Have you ended every sentence with a period, question mark or exclamation point?

...Are your thoughts within sentences broken up correctly by commas for easier understanding?

...Have you broken up series by commas?

...Have you used a period after abbreviations?

...If you are in doubt about the proper punctuation of a sentence, have you asked or looked it up in your grammar book?

Quotation Marks

...Did you remember to place exact quotes within quotation marks?

...Did you place all periods and commas inside the quotation marks while placing semicolons and colons outside them?

Subject-Verb Agreements

...Check every subject and verb to make sure that if you have used a singular subject, you have also used a singular verb.

...Similarly, a plural subject needs a plural verb.

Sentence Length

...Compute the average number of words per sentence. How close is that number compared to the average of 22?

...Have you varied the length of sentences in each paragraph?

...If your sentences are too long, break them into shorter units.

...Sentences that are very short tend to produce a jerky style of writing.

...Does each sentence follow clearly and logically from the one before it? Have you used some type of transitional device between each sentence?

Apostrophes

...Have you used them correctly to indicate possession? If you're unsure, check a grammar book.

Tenses

...Have you incorrectly jumped about in different tenses?

...Have you used the correct form of the verb to express the tense you want?

Capitalization

...Have you capitalized names of persons, cities, countries, streets, and titles?

...Have you capitalized a quotation according to the original and the needs of your sentence?

Spelling

...Check any word you have doubts about.

...If you are unsure of the spelling of a certain word, look it up.

...Be especially careful of the words listed as spelling nightmares; also "ei" and "ie" words, words which add "-ing" and "ed," and words with one or more sets of double letters.

Paragraphing

...Does each paragraph have a topic sentence that states the main idea?

...Have you used examples and vivid specific details to describe your topic?

...Have you used explanatory sentences to give your opinion or judgment on the topic?

...Have you included sentences that pertain only to that idea?

...Are transitions used between sentences and paragraphs?

...Is there a concluding sentence?

Omissions

...Have you left out any words in your sentences?

Publishing

1. Copy - Write or type your report as neatly as you can.
2. Make your cover attractive so that it will coordinate with your entire project.
3. Make your bibliography.
4. Check - Read over your report again to make sure you have not left out anything, or made any mistakes in copying.

FORMAT FOR RESEARCH PAPER

Papers submitted to DeKalb County Social Studies Fair must follow this format.

I. Title page

- A. Name of project (If the name of the project is not the question researched, the question researched should appear as a subtitle.)
- B. Student's name
- C. Grade
- D. Discipline
- E. School name
- F. Teacher's name

II. Verification page (required if student did not type his or her own paper.)

III. Thesis Statement page (formerly referred to as the Purpose page)

- A. Clearly state why the topic of research was chosen
- B. Present an overview of the content that will be covered

IV. Methodology page

- A. Outline the steps followed to complete the social studies project
- B. Students may choose to illustrate the process in the form of a timeline

V. Research

- A. Introductory paragraph
 - 1. Clearly state the general theme
 - 2. Basic ideas that will be developed
- B. Research findings
 - 1. Present information in an orderly, sequential and convincing manner
 - 2. Include adequate and properly balanced information

VI. Conclusion page

- A. Present a summary of the arguments and/or key ideas presented in the pages, which lead to a conclusion

VII. Credit page (optional)

- A. Give credit to anyone who provides assistance

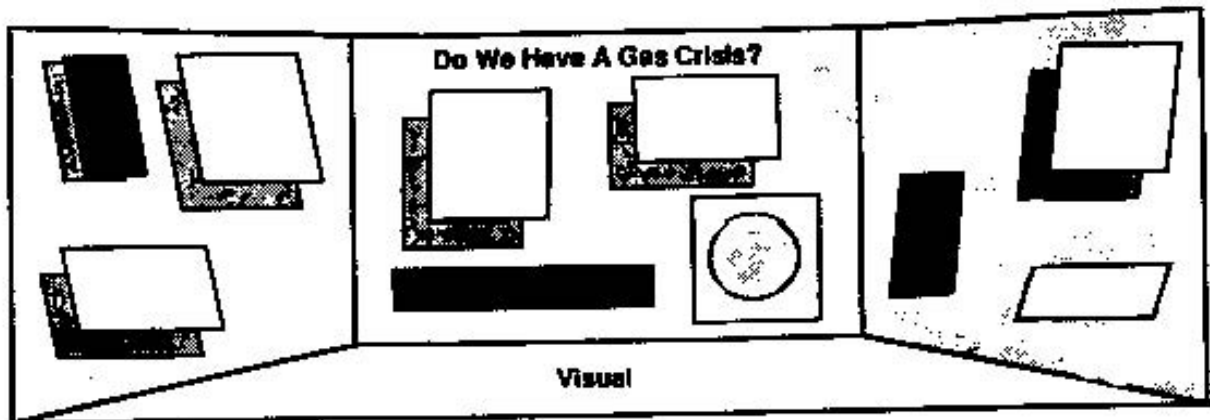
VIII. Bibliography

PREPARING A BACKBOARD

1. Start gathering materials early for your backboard. Save a copy of every letter you write concerning request for information about your topic. Have a basket, box, or drawer where you can put magazine articles, pamphlets, etc., that might be useful. Don't throw away anything until you have completed your backboard.
2. Buy or build your display board.
3. Paint the display board or cover it with fabric or paper, if desired.
4. Draw out a plan that uses the materials you have gathered and which include the required parts of a backboard. You might try drawing several sketches or plans so you can pick the one that best suits your purpose. Keep in mind that an orderly arrangement will bring unity to your work and that a preliminary sketch will help work problems out on paper.
5. Using the preliminary sketch or plan, lay out the letters and other items you have gathered on your backboard. Be especially careful to leave neat margins and good spacing for your lettering.

HAVE SOMEONE CHECK YOUR LETTERING FOR CORRECT SPELLING!

6. As a final step, glue down the letters and other documentation you have planned for your backboard.



Elements of a Backboard

Each backboard must have:

- f a 3x5 card attached to the front of the backboard which has the class (grade level), discipline under which the project will be judged (the category), the name of the student, the name of the supervising teacher, and the name of the school.
- f a title of the project (either the title must be in the form of a question or an additional part must be added somewhere to the backboard which clearly states the question researched).
- f a purpose of the project.
- f a statement of the methodology used for researching or investigating the topic.
- f visuals to illustrate the topic (pictures, charts, graphs, maps, etc).
- f the conclusion to the question researched (this may be taken directly from the conclusion in the body of the student's research paper).

Backboard Size

The backboard must not be larger than 48" in width and 60" in height. The depth of the project (how much it measures from front to back) should not exceed 30". That 30" includes all the tabletop space allowed for your backboard and model if you make one.

Due to the fact that the aisles must be kept clear so that people may pass between tables of displays, having models or other materials in front of the table on the floor is highly discouraged. The regulations state that 30" is the maximum depth for each student's social studies project.

Display Board Material

The backboard should be of "sturdy" materials such as plywood, pegboard, cardboard, or other material that will stand on its own for display purposes. Project Display Board or other commercially prepared cardboard display boards are sold at office or school supply stores. Foam-board or foam-core cut with a center out, or two side cuts for standing are sold at art and office supply stores. Some art supply stores will cut the foam-core for a small cost. You may also cut it yourself by using a utility knife and a metal ruler. You must cut through only the bottom layer of the foam-core. If you cut through both the bottom and top layer, the pieces will separate. The idea is just to make the unit stand on its own.

ALWAYS HAVE A PARENT HELP OR WATCH WHILE YOU ARE USING A UTILITY KNIFE OR OTHER SHARP OBJECT!

Advantages of covering the boards:

1. The color of the background may be part of your overall color scheme and may help reinforce your topic.
2. A covered board will not "fight" the surface of the display board itself. For example, the grain of the wood, the texture of the circles in the pegboard, or the lines in the cardboard may compete with your design for attention. The background should be a part of your design and not something that works against it.
3. A covered board helps to bring unity to your work.

Materials for covering the board

1. You may decide to paint the board. That will work well, especially on plywood. Perhaps a latex paint would be easy to use. If you try to paint cardboard, make sure the paint is not too thin and watery. If it is, the cardboard may buckle.
2. Fabric makes a good covering. As long as the cloth is not exceptionally thin, it will cover the board nicely. Felt may be used. When using cloth fabric, you have the possibility of getting enough width not to have to piece the cloth. That way you don't have to deal with seams or ragged edges.
3. Paper may also be used. The bulletin board paper (sulfite paper) may be purchased at teacher supply stores. A variety of colors is usually available.

Project Lettering

Lettering is very important in communicating your topic and your research. Your title should have large, bold lettering to clearly state what your project is all about.

Lettering should be consistent. In other words, keep your letters the same size in the section you are working on. Also, lettering should not be crooked if you are attempting to line your lettering up in straight lines. Uphill or downhill lettering draws the eye to it like a magnet! Take time to measure and space the letters so you will have just the right distance between letters and words. Remember not to let your letters run off the edges or off the top.

Lettering possibilities:

- cut letters from felt or construction paper (either free-hand or die-cut)
- neatly drawn letters colored in with magic marker
- purchased letters such as vinyl or run-ons (sold at office supply stores and drug stores)
- stenciled letters
- computerized lettering
- punch-out letters (sold at teacher supply stores)
- lettering printed on strips of clear tape (special machine needed)

Design Elements for Creating an Attractive Backboard

A good backboard will be a work of art in itself. It will reflect a good composition or an orderly arrangement. The following principles of design will help to create good composition.

Center of interest: Do you have something that catches the eye? A center of interest acts to draw in the viewer's attention.

Color Scheme: Using a color scheme to create your backboard will help to organize your board. The colors you choose may well reflect your topic. For example, red, white, and blue for a patriotic theme; brown and green for ecological issues; black and yellow for strong visual clarity; or shades of blue for a marine topic. *Black or white with another color always makes a strong statement.*

Contrast: Is there enough of a difference between the colors you have chosen to make for easy reading? You do not want your work to fade into the background.

Balance: Check to see that the overall design is carried out throughout the display board. Try to make masses or items evenly distributed so that harmony is achieved.

Variety: Have you brought interest to your topic by using different graphs, charts, maps, pictures, etc.?

Rhythm: An orderly progression is important to good composition. Since we read from left to right, it might be valuable to place the purpose to the left of the board and end with the conclusion on the right. Give the display board a well thought out sense of order, and it will be more easily understood and read by the viewer.

Unity: This principle of design shows oneness or wholeness. Ask yourself if your backboard works with all the parts coming together as a whole. A backboard will achieve unity if all the parts seem necessary.

DO NOT OVERDO YOUR PROJECT! Your work should be clear and concise.

KEEP YOUR PROJECT NEAT. Terrific resources, good research, and wonderful visuals can be ruined by messy work.

TIPS TO HELP YOU COMPLETE YOUR PROJECT

1. Avoid whiteout. It draws the eye to the mistake.
2. Use straight pins to place materials prior to gluing. This allows you to rearrange items, but it will keep down unwanted movement by wind, air, etc.
3. Pin a piece of yarn at equal distances from the top of the backboard to have a guideline for placing letters.
4. Take time to cut out pictures, graphs, etc., evenly. Ragged edges draw attention.
5. Use construction paper or colored paper behind pictures, graphs, etc. to give them a framed look.
6. Try a border of some kind. It might be as simple as an evenly cut strip of paper or as detailed as individually drawn pictures.
7. Never mark on uncovered foam-board. It is possible to erase the pencil marks, but it will leave the impression.
8. Clean up guidelines with a kneaded eraser so it won't leave smudged areas.
9. Use spray fixative in a well-ventilated area. White glue will wrinkle the paper, and once it is used, it has no "give" for re-positioning letters, pictures, etc.
10. Rubber cement is a terrific adhesive, but it must be used in a well-ventilated space. If some of the rubber cement shows on the front of the backboard, just let it dry and rub it up into little balls for easy clean-up.



USING MODELS

Models add a great deal to a social studies project. They give a three-dimensional interpretation of the topic.

Examples of display items that you might include as a part of your projects are:

Models	Diagrams
Murals	Historical collections
Dioramas	Video tapes
Recordings	Maps
Artifacts	Slides
Graphs	Films
Charts	Photographs
Filmstrips	PowerPoint

Rules for model use

The use of commercial models, such as model planes and ships, toy soldiers, toy furniture and dishes, and any other commercial objects, is discouraged. Students are encouraged to be creative in constructing original models.

Materials for models

Modeling clay, wood, Plaster of Paris, papier-mâché, pipe cleaners, tooth picks, Popsicle sticks, paper clay (does not have to be fired), Styrofoam, cardboard, paper tubes, fabric (including felt), construction paper, boxes, tissue paper, aluminum foil, and so forth may be used.

Collections or objects of value

Students are encouraged to make replicas, if possible, instead of using valuable collections. For example: Make an arrowhead collection from Plaster of Paris rather than displaying the real thing. Security is always an area of concern. Therefore, students are asked to avoid displaying valuable items.

USING AUDIO/VISUAL EQUIPMENT

A student may use audio/visual materials to coordinate with his or her topic. Video presentations, slide shows, taped interviews, etc., are examples of the types of presentations that are allowed.

Student responsibility

If audio-visual equipment is needed for the presentation, the student must furnish that equipment. No school equipment will be loaned out to the student for such purposes. It is the student's responsibility to furnish extension cords and to see that the cords do not cause a safety problem.

Security for equipment

All audio-visual equipment must be secured to prevent theft. It is recommended that monitors, VCRs, cassette players, etc. be chained to the table.

Total audio-visual time

The presentations cannot exceed ten (10) minutes total time.

CHECK LIST FOR A COMPLETED PROJECT

CHECKLIST ITEMS	YES	NO
1. Is my research question appropriately stated?		
2. Is my written report clear, concise, and grammatically correct?		
3. Are all my words spelled correctly?		
4. Does my written report include:		
a. Title page		
b. Verification page (Include only if someone other than you typed your paper.)		
c. Purpose page		
d. Methodology page		
e. Research		
f. Conclusion page		
g. Bibliography		
h. Credit page (Optional- this page can be used to give recognition to someone was especially helpful to you)		
5. Is my exhibit durable and easily movable?		
6. Is my exhibit appropriate for the particular discipline for which I prepared it?		
7. Does my backboard include:		
a. A clear statement of the question researched		
b. Purpose		
c. Methodology		
d. Evidence of my research		
e. Conclusion		
8. Is my name and other required information included on both my research paper and my display?		
9. Have I set up my completed project and done a final examination of my entire display?		
10. Is my exhibit attractive and appealing?		
11. Have I secured audio/visual equipment and extension cords if needed?		
12. Have I created an Abstract Card for my interview?		

ABSTRACT

An abstract of the project should be included on a 4"x6" card. Information on the abstract provides a description of project title, statement of the problem, methodology, and conclusion. **Students will give this card to the judges at the beginning of the oral interview.**

SAMPLE ABSTRACT

Title: Advertising and Fast Food: How Effective?

Name(s): John Jones and Mary Martin

Statement of the Problem: The purpose of this project will determine the effectiveness of fast food restaurant advertising.

Methodology: Surveys were administered to 138 elementary students asking them to match advertising slogans to company's names. Sales accounts were compared from five fast food restaurants for two months.

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

APPENDIX

SAMPLE PARENT LETTER

SAMPLE

Dear Parent:

Preparations for the annual Social Studies Fair are in progress. Today your child received information which outlines the requirements, format, and due dates for the project. If he/she intends to participate in the DeKalb County Social Studies Fair, a research paper and an accompanying backboard are required.

Please review this information with your child today, just as we have done at school. Your child will need help and support in choosing a topic and locating information. A successful project for your child will represent his/her work, not that of a parent or expert.

This project will provide a variety of educational experiences. Students will take notes, make an outline, write a research paper, and organize a bibliography. Students who prepare a backboard will gain artistic skills in lettering, spacing, and balance. Classroom teachers are also working with your child to help them develop these skills.

Please be aware of the timeline and help your child plan assignments in accordance with the due dates for each aspect of the project. A pocket folder is ideal for organizing all information and research. Large notecards (5" x 8") are suggested for note taking. Prior to submitting the rough draft, your child will ask you to proofread his/her paper for grammar and spelling errors.

Your cooperation and support are appreciated in this valuable learning experience. Please sign the bottom portion of this letter and return after reviewing the information with your child.

Sincerely,

I have reviewed the Social Studies Fair information with my child,

Child's Name

Parent(s) Signature

SAMPLE

SAMPLE STUDENT LETTER

Dear Student:

Today you are receiving Social Studies Fair information which outlines requirements, format, and due dates. If you intend to participate in the DeKalb County Social Studies Fair, a research paper and an accompanying backboard are required. Your research paper will be included in your Language Arts and Social Studies grades.

Please review the information in the packet with your parents. You may need help and support choosing a topic and locating information. Remember that parents need advance notice and reminders when you must be driven somewhere, so ask first and give lots of lead-time. A successful project will represent your own work, however, not that of a parent or an expert. A pocket folder is ideal for keeping all project information and research organized. Note cards are necessary for taking notes, but you may make your own.

You will prepare a 600-word research paper using a variety of sources, with no more than one (1) encyclopedia. Before turning in your rough draft, ask your parents or an adult friend to proofread your paper for grammar and spelling errors.

The project will help you develop many of the skills necessary for a successful academic and business career. Doing research, compiling notes, making a good working outline, writing a well planned and documented paper, and creating a visual display that you are proud of will develop organizational skills and give you confidence.

Please be aware of the timeline and plan your work assignments according to the due dates for each aspect of the project. Enthusiasm and motivation are essential for a successful project. Remember, choose a topic you really like, and have fun rising to the challenge.

Sincerely,

JUDGES SCORE SHEET

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.)

Superlative	Good	Needs Improvement	Not Present
Judges, please enter points in this column:			

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

The project includes a/an

- | | | | | | |
|--|----|---|---|---|-------|
| A. question/purpose that is clearly stated; | na | 1 | 0 | 0 | _____ |
| B. question/purpose that is original or explores some new aspect of the topic; | na | 1 | 0 | 0 | _____ |
| C. question/purpose that is neither too limited nor too broad; | na | 1 | 0 | 0 | _____ |
| D. question/purpose that addresses a significant local, state, national or international social studies topic; and | na | 1 | 0 | 0 | _____ |
| E. abstract that concisely states the project title, purpose, methodology, and conclusion(s). | na | 1 | 0 | 0 | _____ |

Section Total

II. Summary Paper (30 points)

The summary paper includes

- | | | | | | |
|---|----|---|---|----|-------|
| A. a statement of the problem; | na | 2 | 1 | 0 | _____ |
| B. development of the topic; | 5 | 4 | 3 | 0 | _____ |
| C. interpretation of the topic; | 5 | 4 | 3 | 0 | _____ |
| D. evidence of critical thinking (evaluation and interpretation of data); | 5 | 4 | 3 | 0 | _____ |
| E. a logical conclusion that is well-developed and answers the question being explored; | 5 | 4 | 3 | 0 | _____ |
| F. correct grammar; | na | 2 | 1 | na | _____ |
| G. correct spelling; | na | 2 | 1 | na | _____ |
| H. correct punctuation; and | na | 2 | 1 | na | _____ |
| I. correct bibliographic style (APA, MLA, Turabian--as directed by the supervising teacher, based on local system curriculum requirements). | na | 2 | 1 | 0 | _____ |

Section Total

III. Visual Display (25 points)

The visual display includes/demonstrates

- | | | | | | |
|--|----|---|---|---|-------|
| A. display of the question/purpose; | na | 1 | 0 | 0 | _____ |
| B. display of the methodology; | na | 1 | 0 | 0 | _____ |
| C. display of the conclusion; | na | 1 | 0 | 0 | _____ |
| D. display of data/information that supports the conclusion; | na | 2 | 1 | 0 | _____ |
| E. appropriate choice/correct use of media or format for presentation of data; | 5 | 4 | 3 | 0 | _____ |
| F. a pleasing visual and/or auditory effect; | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | _____ |
| G. conscientiousness of workmanship as manifested by accuracy, neatness, and craftsmanship; | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | _____ |
| H. creativity or originality (including the absence of commercially prepared models) in the construction, arrangement and presentation of the materials; | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | _____ |
| I. display and other media within size and time specifications; | na | 3 | 0 | 0 | _____ |
| J. correct grammar; | na | 1 | 0 | 0 | _____ |
| K. correct spelling; and | na | 1 | 0 | 0 | _____ |
| L. correct punctuation. | na | 1 | 0 | 0 | _____ |

Section Total

(continued)

Georgia Social Studies Fair Judges' Score Sheet

	Superlative	Good	Needs Improvement	Not Present	
IV. Oral Presentation (10 points)					
<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					
V. Methodology (30 points)					
<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: _____