

# Oklahoma National History Day

## What is a Historical Performance?

A performance is a live, dramatic presentation of your topic's significance in history.

You may perform individually or as part of a group. A performance should be a scripted portrayal based on research of your chosen topic. Your script should be structured on a thesis statement, supporting statements, and a conclusion. Your performance should have dramatic appeal, but not at the expense of historical information.

### How is a Performance Different from Other Categories?

The performance category is the only one that is presented live. Developing a strong narrative that allows your subject to unfold in a dramatic and visually interesting way is important. Memorizing, rehearsing, and refining your script is essential, so you should schedule time for this in addition to research, writing, costuming, and prop gathering.

### Getting Started

Decide whether the chosen topic will be most effective as a group or individual performance.

**Research the topic first.** Write down important facts or quotes that may be important to the performance. Write a thesis statement, supporting statements, and a conclusion. Think about how these might become part of your performance.

**Prepare a script.** Brainstorm with general ideas and how they might be presented. If a group is performing, each member should describe different ways in which characters might interact.

- Make sure your script contains references to the historical evidence found in your research.
- Using actual dialogue, quotations, or brief excerpts from speeches are good ways to put historical detail into your performance.
- Remember that your script should center on the thesis statement, supporting statements, and the conclusion that you developed from your research.

**Prepare the set.** Think about different types of sets that might help depict your topic. Is there a prop that is central to the story?

**Prepare the blocking.** To “block” a performance is to determine where the actors will stand, move, and/or relate to the set. You should consider these movements when deciding which type of set to design.

**Prepare the costuming.** Good costumes help make a performer convincing, but make sure they are appropriate to the topic. You do not need to purchase or make an elaborate costume; sometimes simple clothes work best (e.g., a white shirt and dark pants/skirt can fit almost any time period).

**Practice, practice, practice!** Work on speaking clearly, pronouncing all words correctly, and projecting your voice so that the judges and the audience can hear every word. Rehearse with the set and full costumes as often as possible.