

Edit Your Information

How to Choose What to Keep and What to Set Aside

Instead of finding a reason to throw information out, look at each concept and find a reason – a strong reason – to keep it.

Keep Relevant Key Information.

- Key information answers ‘Who, What, When, Where, Why, How.’
- Information that relates your topic to the NHD theme is key information!
- Keep key information so long as it is really relevant.
- Does the info support a central concept or provide a key viewpoint?
- Is the information from an important source, or does it provide diversity?
- If you cut the information, would it damage your argument? Would the argument/concept/theme relevance still stand? Is the information necessary?
- Some key information may not be relevant. Example – biographical information about a historical figure in the event of your topic. Not every detail is relevant to your work.

Keep some Attention-grabbing Information.

- Attention-grabbers are: interesting information, anecdotes, quotes, data, charts, illustrations, photos, titles, subtitles, and sometimes captions.
- Attention-grabbers are tools to use in your presentation - use them effectively.
 - Visual clues about ‘where to start’ – Access Points.
 - Guide readers to your key arguments and your central concepts.
 - Pull quotes, titles, subtitles and other information that tells about the information near it are all useful this way.
 - Use sidebars for related information that’s hard to fit into your central concepts – but don’t use too many.
 - Sidebars are like postscripts (P.S.) on a letter – there shouldn’t be more content in the postscripts than there are in the letter!
- Toss attention-grabbers that don’t make a significant statement about your topic - they waste your ‘real estate’ (the space you have to work with).
- Knowing when information is attention-grabbing – the ‘Hey Mom/ Dad’ test.
 - Does the information make you want to stop and tell your parents about it, or your project partners? ‘Hey, listen to/look at this!’
That’s a good first indication that you’ve got an attention-grabber.

Set Aside Fluff and Filler.

- Toss unrelated information, even if it’s interesting.
- Sift through information that says the same thing, and use only the primary resource or the strongest source. Cite that others agreed with them rather than quoting each one.
- Set aside information that is good but not as strong as other information, or not as important. What tells your story? What are just extra details (fluff)?



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Write to an Audience

Considerations for the Exhibit Setting

How to write for an exhibition audience to effectively communicate the substance and significance of your topic.

Write and Outline and Stick to it as Best You Can.

- Keeps you on target by helping you make a clear path through your topic for the reader.
- Use your three central concepts and connect each one to the topic and the NHD theme.
- Try to assign a word count to each section and stick to it.

Be Succinct.

- Write clearly with simply stated ideas (easier for audience to absorb).
- String ideas together one at a time with the same 'string' – carry your central ideas through each piece of information so people never lose the important idea to the details.
- Use summaries to help readers who jump in at different places to 'catch up'.

Don't Bury Your Ideas in Too Many Flowery Words.

- Let the content speak for itself – significant events will tell their own stories.
- Don't embellish it, just tell it. Some extra emphasis in wording is good, but don't overdo it.

Maintain a Quiet Tone of Relevancy.

- Bring back reminders of how bits of information are relevant to the NHD theme – how a concept or idea or piece of information is relevant.
- So any reader understands how the information is relevant to the theme at any point.
- Use keywords (words that reflect the theme) as well as direct statements to show relevancy, so you don't overwhelm your writing with direct statements.

Strategically Use Attention-Grabbers Throughout Your Writing.

- Baits the reader to stay with you longer
- Use attention-grabbers (see 'Edit' handout) and visual structure to make clear access points and navigation for your audience.

Edit, Edit, Edit.

- Edit more than once! (Before writing, as you write, between drafts)
- Use these editing and writing suggestions multiple times to streamline and polish your work.
- Throw out redundancies (except useful ones, like summaries) – especially look for redundant language – 'It was 3:00 pm in the afternoon' is redundant.
- Ask for review from family members or teachers – pay attention to their feedback!

Remember to Check Your Word Count!

- Overdo it on the number of words you write and you will not only overwhelm your audience, but you could disqualify yourself!
- 500 Word Count LIMIT according to the NHD Judging Sheet, not including captions.



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