SAMPLE: 2019 JUDGE ORIENTATION SCRIPT
Based on the Sample Judge Orientation developed by National History Day for use at Regional and Affiliate contests.

To Coordinators -- Before you develop your orientation, please review this and the accompanying PowerPoint very carefully. You are strongly encouraged to use this orientation as your guide, tweaking the logistical information. If you develop your own orientation, it is essential that you use the language provided here, particularly about contest rules. DO NOT paraphrase rules. Provide them in the exact language as appears in the Rule Book. Also, DO NOT add or subtract rules. It is imperative that all NHD contest participants, at all levels, are evaluated in accordance with the same rules and evaluation rubrics. Changes are not permitted for any reason.

Welcome
1. Thank you for supporting National History Day. Judging represents the capstone of the National History Day program. Many young people have engaged in months of research and preparation, and they are anxiously awaiting your evaluations. We very much appreciate your time and energy here today.

2. Before we get into the instructions about judging, let’s go over the logistical details that you’ll want to know about today.
   a. Your schedule is…
   b. Lunch/Dinner is available…
   c. When you are finished judging the entries in your category, please return to this room (or wherever) and…
   d. Restrooms are located…
   e. To reach me, here is my cell phone number…
   f. For general questions or for technical assistance, please ask anyone wearing a staff badge or…

General Instructions
1. The theme is "Triumph and Tragedy in History." The students have been very creative in choosing their topics. You must decide if they have adequately explained their topic's relationship to the theme and significance in history. In addition to providing basic information about their topics, the entries must draw conclusions about significance. Be open minded and allow the entry to convince you, if you are somewhat skeptical -- but make sure that the entry is convincing and the evidence is clear.

2. You will be working on a team of two/three judges. One of the two/three judges has been designated as the team captain and is responsible for guiding the team in accomplishing the necessary tasks.

3. Please remember that your evaluations should be based on the quality of the work, and most importantly on the historical quality.

4. When considering your evaluation of “clarity of presentation,” be careful to avoid being swayed by glitz. Your evaluation should be based on the clarity and appropriateness of the style of the entry for its particular category. Remember that the message is most important; the medium is not the message. Conversely, do expect a visually appealing presentation. But remember: this section is worth only 20% of the total evaluation. Be careful not to give “cute points.” Historical quality and relationship to the theme are most important.

5. Please remember that you will be evaluating the work of young students. They may be nervous to discuss their work with a new person.
6. Your written comments are meaningful to students. Your comments on the evaluation sheets should include constructive criticism and positive remarks. Do not make negative comments. Be careful how you phrase your comments.

7. Do not lecture the students regarding their work. This is their day to be the experts.

8. Remember to discuss your evaluations with one another. You do not need to completely agree with one another but your evaluations must make sense as a whole.

10. Remember that all judges on a team must consider any rule infractions and factor such infractions into the final ranking. But there is a difference between minor and major infractions. You should not allow a minor rule infraction to determine the final ranking of the entry. The rules provide the parameters for the competition, but they, in and of themselves, are not the most important aspect of the contest.
   - Minor infractions such as an error on the title page should not take an entry out of contention. BUT, such infractions should be noted on the evaluation sheets so that they may be corrected before the entry moves on to the next level of competition.
   - Major rule infractions, such as size or time limit, should be considered in the final ranking. Talk to the event coordinator about these rule infractions – not the students!

11. Evaluation sheets: (Explain your process for collecting evaluation sheets and processing them.)

12. Remember that the Process Paper that students must provide in the performance, documentary, website, and exhibit categories must be a description of how the students went about the research and creation of the entry and concludes with an explanation of the topic's relationship to the theme. This should not be a research paper about the topic.

13. Attached to the process paper should be an annotated bibliography. Each annotation should explain how the work was used in producing the entry and the student's rationale for classifying each source as primary or secondary.

14. Interviews: After viewing the entry or reading the paper, you should ask questions of the students. The purpose is to clarify any concerns or questions you have, and to provide some interaction between the professional and student. Ask something of substance regarding the topic. Sample questions: Why did you choose this topic? How did you begin the research process? What was your most important source and why? On what, in particular, do you want us to focus?

15. Do not tell the students what their evaluations are or who the winners are. Save all evaluative comments for the deliberation time with your judging teammates. And be sure to hold that conversation well out of earshot of students, parents and teachers.

16. Do you have a final round of competition at your school event? If so, describe the process here.

17. For a smooth and efficient competition, it is essential that you keep to the time limit. If you have no-show entries, this is the procedure…

18. Absent group members: What is your policy on missing group members?

19. Please be aware at all times of your body language and comments. It is crucial that you behave the exact same way with every entry that you see. If you need a break in order to regain some energy, please take one. (Tell them what procedure, if any, that they need to follow when taking an unscheduled break.). If you don't care for a particular topic or if you are very excited about a topic, try not to let that show. Also, please turn off your cell phone, put it away and do not look at it during judging.
Category-Specific Instructions

1. **Performances**: A performance must be original (students cannot use something that is already written); performers should display stage presence, including clear and audible voices; costumes do not need to be authentic but should be simple and appropriate for the topic (wearing red and white for a performance on the Civil War is not a good idea); take into consideration nerves, forgotten lines, and audience applause or laughter when timing the performance.

2. **Documentaries**: A documentary should be a documentary, something you might see on PBS or HISTORY. It should not be simply a performance on videotape; students must run all equipment; a web site is not appropriate for this category. The room will be dark. Please stay awake!

3. **Exhibits**: An exhibit should be like a museum exhibit writ small; it should contain no more than 500 student composed words – but keep in mind that this 500 word limit does not include primary sources, newspaper articles, but does include timelines, captions, etc.); be careful to spend an equal amount of time with each student and exhibit.

4. **Papers**: Paper judges should have read their papers ahead of time; now they must interview the students.

5. **Web Sites**: Web site judges should have reviewed the web sites ahead of time; now they must interview the students.

9. In closing, please know how much I/we appreciate you for devoting your time and energy to this learning experience for students.

10. Thank them again!