

# WORKING WITH VOLUNTEERS AND/OR HISTORY DAY MENTORS

Mentors or volunteers (retired teachers, past HD Students, parents, etc.) can be a great addition to a History Day classroom, if they are available in your region. They can lend an extra hand and provide one-on-one guidance that will help your students to get the most out of their project. Be sure to watch for the **Fall Survey** that is emailed to all enrolled teachers and send it back to request a mentor. It is first come, first serve based on availability.

- **Set a Schedule:** Discuss when your mentor/volunteer is available and when you are planning on working on History Day. Doing this will help to avoid unexpected problems down the road in availability.
- **Discuss Roles and Goals:** Discuss what each party would like to get out of this relationship. As a teacher, where do you feel you need the most help? As a volunteer/mentor, what skills can you share with this classroom?
- **Communicate:** Be sure to keep clear lines of communication throughout the History Day year. As a mentor/volunteer, you must remember that the teacher AND the students are depending on you. Unexplained absences will weaken your relationship with students. As a teacher, you must remember that volunteers/mentors may be juggling obligations with their own work and potentially other History Day schools.

The role of mentors/volunteers in the classroom will evolve throughout the History Day process. In general, mentors/volunteers are there to provide assistance to you and your students.

## Suggested Roles for Mentors/Volunteers

- Help students brainstorm topics.
- Help students look up books in an online catalog.
- Help students locate resources in a library.
- Discuss documents with students that may be confusing or above their reading level.
- Proofread drafts of projects or thesis statements.
- Help students write a citation for a source.
- Assist students with a technical problem with a website or documentary.
- Practice lines with a performance student.

## Mentors/Volunteers Should Not...

- Be expected to teach the class or lesson.
- Do research for a student.
- Read sources and take notes for students.
- Write a thesis statement, exhibit text, or script for students.
- Block out a performance or make decisions in selecting costumes.