

ISBE Civics Mandate

Junior Division (Grades 6-8)



History Fair can be used to fulfill the ISBE middle grades Civics Mandate! In fact IL History Day – of which CMHF is a regional affiliate – is listed as a resource on [ISBE's own website discussing the civics mandate](#), along with many of the most commonly used and recommended CMHF resources! In fact, teachers who already participate in History Fair are well on their way to fulfilling the Civics Mandate for the middle grades.

“... every public elementary school shall include in its sixth-, seventh-, or eight-grade curriculum, beginning with the 2020-21 school year, at least one semester of civics education, which shall help young people acquire and learn to use the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will prepare them to be competent and responsible citizens throughout their lives. Civics education course content shall focus on government institutions, the discussion of current and societal issues, service learning, and simulations of the democratic process.”

The Civics Mandate states...	How History Fair aligns:
<p><i>“acquire and learn to use the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will prepare them to be competent and responsible citizens throughout their lives”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our mission states “History Fair students not only become historians, they also become better citizens.”¹ • As students select and analyze historical sources, they must evaluate and corroborate these sources. • The ability of our students to evaluate the reliability of sources and information will “not only make them better students, but better informed citizens able to participate in our democracy in an educated and responsible way.”²
<p><i>“course content shall focus on government institutions”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers may require or encourage topics that focus on government institutions. These could include “foundations of our American government, branches of government, and other institutions.”
<p><i>“course content shall focus on . . . the discussion of current and societal issues”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are encouraged to connect their historical topic of choice with the present day. Teachers may require this connection to be part of the project or give a supplemental assignment asking students to explicitly make this connection
<p><i>“course content shall focus on . . . service learning”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During project registration for regional contests, students will be required to answer a question about their next steps or call to action for their project viewer(s) (ISBE considers “advocacy for public policy” at any level of government to be “service learning”³) • Students competing at CMHF regional contests will be asked to explain what action steps they would encourage a viewer to take in response to the findings of their project
<p><i>“course content shall focus on . . . simulations of the democratic process”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The freedom – and responsibility – of selecting their own topic is a democratic act by student historians • Working in group projects can function as a miniature simulation of government as roles are divided among students and competing interests must be expressed (or submerged) in a final group product

[ISBE's Civics Mandate Guidance Document](#) also states that “all social science courses should strive to incorporate inquiry skills simultaneously with disciplinary concepts,” reinforcing the idea that inquiry is a valuable mode of learning about civics.

¹ www.chicagohistory.org/education/historyfair/support/

² <https://cor.stanford.edu/whats-at-stake/>

³ <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Guidance-Doc-Civics-MS.pdf>