A Three Step Planning Guide For National History Day Exhibit

Objectives: Students can use these planning steps to define an exhibit topic, use support resources, and develop a storyline.

Step 1. What’s The Storyline?
- Decide on your topic. Make it small enough to tell an interesting story FROM BEGINNING TO END. Tell a whole story, not an entire story.
- Theme + topic = thesis statement posed as a question
- Use a theme to formulate a thesis.
- Use one or both sides to tell the story
  Ex: Triumph and Tragedy: The Tragedy Before / The Triumph After

Step 2. Who’s Saying What?
- Work with librarian and create a bibliography
- Triangulate the data for each part: past (beginning), present (main topic), future (end)
  ▫ Primary data
  ▫ Secondary data
  ▫ Expert opinions / Community
- Use note cards to track each resource.
- Are there enough resources to tell the story?
  ▫ Need 2 to 3 sources for each area.
  ▫ If less, revise the question / topic.

Step 3. Tell Me Your Story
- Summarize the story:
  ▫ First share the story with partner, parent or teacher.
  ▫ Then, using the previous step, write a paragraph about the story
  ▫ Expand your paragraph to include past, present, and future to outline the story.
- Storyboard the Project
  
  Overall Explanation: Your paragraph about the story.
  
  Past:
  ▫ Headline: Sub-theme + the topic. i.e., The Tragedy of Alaskan Education Before Molly Hootch
  ▫ Text
  ▫ Resources: photos, quotes, maps, illustrations
Present:
- Headline: Sub-theme + the topic. i.e., *Molly Hootch Goes to Court*
- Text
- Resources: photos, quotes, maps, illustrations

Future:
- Headline: Sub-theme + the topic. i.e., *Equal Access: A Triumph for Alaskan Education*
- Text
- Resources: photos, quotes, maps, illustrations

**Final Conclusion:** Answer the question posed in the beginning