

# Edit Your Information

## How to Choose What to Keep and What to Set Aside

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*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

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*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.

- Bait 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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