# Culminating Task

## Suggested Subject Levels: All Grades

## Subject: History

## Suggested Ontario Curriculum Expectations:

The possibilities to integrate curriculum expectations from different subject areas are, here, rich and enticing. If the studies are undertaken in a secondary school, it is recommended that the history teacher work cooperatively with other teachers so that students will have opportunities to see how harmoniously various subjects can be integrated in school life. To paraphrase John Dewey’s caution to educators, life outside of schools has an organic unity that we neglect when departmentalizing subjects into neat disciplinary boxes.

That said, secondary and middle school history teachers could explicitly make connections to other subjects even without altering the cooperation of colleagues in other subjects. Elementary school teachers, typically responsible for instruction across the curriculum, can integrate various subject matter into a broad culminating research project with greater ease. Links to the curriculum made through the suggested research can include French, Visual Arts, Social Studies, Music, Mathematics, Drama, and Science and Technology.[[1]](#footnote-0)

## Topic: Integrating and Applying the Benchmarks for Historical Thinking

## Content: Social History Research

## Reasoning:

After the students have had opportunities, throughout the various units (to whatever degree the teacher has decided to engage the class with each of the benchmark units), to develop critical and sophisticated positions regarding historical research, they should be given opportunity to apply these to their own communities. This will open up possibilities for research related intimately to the students’ own heritage or latent interest. Student research will then be celebrated by inviting the school, the community, and various communities into the school, where the research will be displayed and shared.

## Goals (Aims and Outcomes):

Students should be expected to conduct critical historical research of a particular social group or community in their city.

## Objectives (Performance and Behavioural Indicators):

Students will:

* Gather primary source evidence, using local archives and libraries, record oral histories, and use this data to establish a history of a social community.
* Establish historical significance of events or individuals
* Consider the causes and consequences of events
* Relate the moral dimensions of happenings uncovered in the research
* Discuss continuity and change as historical forces
* Consider a historical perspective that is not their own

## Materials (Aids/AV/Technology):

Computers with Internet Access

Access to archives and libraries in community

Artistic supplies

## Descriptive model for Culminating Task:

The ideal model for the culminating task is that of the Heritage Fairs established by the Historica Foundation across Canada. One important point to make is that the emphasis here will be on historical research relating to a particular social history within the community, and not on a broad subject within Canadian Heritage.

Students will apply the knowledge learned throughout the exploration of the STONES social histories and the scaffolding lessons aimed at cultivating historical thinking independently. They will present their research, including their primary sources, as a poster/backboard display.

A final, celebratory event will be planned where all the students will display their findings. Other classes in the school, parents, the community, community groups, and local media should be invited into the school to engage with the students and learn from them. The aim here is to showcase the student learning and expertise, not to judge their work in relation to their peers in competition for awards. An excellent set of guidelines for planning a fair, outlined as suggestions and broken down into steps by the Historica Foundation, is included under the title “School Fair Planning Guide.”

Also, included in the folder is a document titled “Heritage Fairs Guide” composed by teachers in Saskatchewan to facilitate planning of a broad culminating task. It includes a series of detailed checklists for the teachers and students planning the event, which can be modified according to the approach decided upon.

Descriptions of different ways that students can present or display their findings are included in a document titled “Project Types.” Teachers can build into the final presentation requirements for students to create a 3-dimensional presentation, a creative/artistic work to relate some aspect of the findings, or a multimedia display.

The teacher’s assessment of the research can take into consideration the depth and quality of the research/analyses, the originality of the presentation/display, the clarity and organization of the social history text, and the student’s ability to talk about the steps involved in the research and the particular findings, as related in a personal interview/conference with the teacher. A sample rubric is included in the folder under the title “Social Histories Fair Rubric.”

1. See, for example, the file titled “Curriculum Links Grade 4” to see a list of expectations integrated by a culminating task similar to the one described here. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)