

2026-2027
History/Social Science Argument

The History/Social Science Competition

Each team will compete against approximately 5 other teams during the first heat. The score that your team receives from the panel of judges will be applied to your total score for the day (the scholarship competition). However, the top scoring/ranking team from each group of 5 in the first heat will go onto the History/Social Science final competition. These top teams will compete for first, second and third place for the History/Social Science award/trophy. Therefore, it is possible that a top-ranking team from one heat could have a lower score than a second or third ranking team from another heat and will not move onto the final round. However, their higher score will still place them in an advantage for the overall score for the day (the scholarship competition).

History/Social Science Argument Guidelines

Two or more team members will prepare the history/social science argument and will present it on the Challenge Day before a panel of judges. The argument, which should address the prompt below, should be 6 to 10 minutes in length. Visual aids, like PowerPoint, are allowed. Your argument must include primary source evidence and interviews that the team members have conducted. On the day of the event, you will submit a list of sources used in the development of your argument. If the list of sources is not included, 15 points will be deducted from the final score. If the list of sources is submitted but does not contain either primary source evidence or interviews, 10 points will be deducted from final score. See scoring rubric.

HISTORY/SOCIAL SCIENCE PROMPT

RACIAL IDENTITY OR OTHER INFLUENCES, WHAT SHAPES THE VOTE?

A voter's race is not a definitive predictor of who he/she/they will vote for in an election. For example, 43% of white Americans voted for Harris and 13% of African Americans voted for Trump in 2024.

However, among African Americans and Latinos, it was a very strong predictor in 2012. That year, Barack Obama received approximately 93% of the Black vote and 71% of the Latino vote. Black voter turnout reached 66.2%, the highest recorded rate at that time and, according to Census Bureau estimates, the first presidential election in which the percentage of the Black electorate that voted exceeded the percentage of the white electorate.

Twelve years later, the voting patterns were different. In 2024, Black voter turnout was lower than in 2012. Research estimates that 83% of Black voters supported Kamala Harris and 15% supported Donald Trump. Among Latino voters, Harris received 51% of the vote, down from Obama's 74% in 2012. 48% of Latino voters supported Trump in 2024.

Is this dramatic change attributable to the candidates themselves, Obama vs Romney in 2012, Harris vs. Trump in 2024, and/or to other factors? To what degree did race play a role?

Develop a thesis explaining the differences in Black voter turnout and Black and Latino voting parents between the 2012 and 2024 elections. Consider the extent to which the candidates themselves contributed to these differences, as well as the political, economic, demographic, social and historical force surrounding each election.

As you formulate your response, we recommend that you draw your information or data from the following kinds of sources:

1. a review of the literature (library, online, etc.) that addresses this issue
2. archived congressional hearings with social media CEO's
3. your own surveying or field research with teenagers and/or young adults
4. interviews with at least **two individuals** from the categories listed below (**this last category is a requirement**)

Please refer to the specific requirements below:

1. **Be sure to review the rubric before you begin your research**
2. Presentation length 6-10 minutes
3. Visual aids may be used
4. Minimum of two face to face, telephone or videoconference interviews with people from the following categories:
 - a. Political campaign organizers or candidates/former candidates
 - b. Electoral campaign analysts
 - c. Media specialists
 - d. University professors
 - e. Elected officials
5. **INTERVIEWING HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS IS NOT ALLOWED**