

Beginners Guide to Documentation

Say what was done in period. Say what you did. Explain any differences.

Documentation is not everyone's favorite part of the Arts and Sciences, but it is important to be able to record what you did and show that you know why it was right or wrong. This is especially important for a competition. A judge can't read your mind to know that what you did was authentic. A judge often needs to be educated on the details of the specific category that you are entering. Good documentation is critical to a good experience for both the entrant and the judge.

The following requirements are needed for an object or a performance entry. A research paper entry has additional requirements!

Good Documentation Must Include:

- What is it?
 - Describe/define the entry.
 - Who used it in period?
 - Why was it used in period?
 - **Where was the country/region of origin? ***
 - If your craft could be found in multiple regions, state this but then give a specific country reference.
 - **When was the time period it was made/used? ***
 - If your craft could be found in multiple time periods, state this but then give a specific time reference.
 - What was the item like in period?
 - **Give pictures, descriptions or other sources for the design, materials, etc. ***
 - **Pictures/diagrams of period pieces, period recipes ***
 - How was it made in period?
 - **What techniques and tools were used in period ***
 - Why did the entrant create the item?
 - How did the entrant make it? (Types of materials, techniques, and tools)
 - What materials, tools did entrant use?
 - What pattern/recipe did entrant use?
 - Try to give high level steps.
 - Does NOT have to be a full tutorial.
 - How did the entry differ from a period example? Why?
 - The entrant proves that they know where they differed and give the reasoning why.
 - (e.g. Period materials/techniques were too expensive/dangerous?, Modern tool was more available?)
 - Sources for your research/information
- * Try to provide sources for this information!

Documentation Extras

- *Brief* history of the item, craft, technique or material being talked about.
- *Brief* discussion of how the item was used in period and/or how you intend to use it now.
- Anything that went wrong in your project; perhaps some lessons learned for next time.

Artemisian Judging Form – Documentation section

1. Rate how well the documentation includes: who, what, where, when, why, and how: _____ (1-4)	
<input type="checkbox"/> What is it? What was the item like in period? (Period examples or discussion) <input type="checkbox"/> Where was the country/region of origin? <input type="checkbox"/> When was the time period it was made/used? <input type="checkbox"/> Who used it in period? <input type="checkbox"/> Why was it used in period? <input type="checkbox"/> Why did the entrant create the item? <input type="checkbox"/> How was it made in period? <input type="checkbox"/> How did the entrant make it? (Types of materials, techniques, and tools)	1-2: Up to half of the questions were answered in the documentation. 3-4: Most/all of the questions were answered in the documentation. (Checkmarks next to the questions to the left are helpful to the entrant.)
2. Rate the extent that the documentation includes the steps of the technique(s): _____ (0-2)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Are the steps of the technique(s) being used clearly explained? <input type="checkbox"/> Are drawings, photos, pictures, diagrams, recipes included where appropriate? <input type="checkbox"/> Are explanations given for why any substitutions/compromises were made in materials/tools/techniques?	0: No 1: Somewhat 2: Yes
3. Rate the sources used in the documentation: _____ (0-2)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Does the information presented trace back to reliable sources? Primary and secondary sources are preferred. (e.g Museum collection items and research books rather than Pinterest and Wikipedia) <input type="checkbox"/> Do the sources used relate to and support the entry? <input type="checkbox"/> Is information appropriately cited? (i.e. Can you tell where the information came from? How to find it again?) <input type="checkbox"/> Is there a bibliography of some sort?	0: No 1: Somewhat 2: Yes
4. Rate the extent that the documentation was organized and legible: _____ (0-2)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Does it include lists of tools, materials, intermediate steps? <input type="checkbox"/> Does it include visuals, if possible, to show the entry in use or otherwise put it into historical perspective? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the documentation generally relevant to the entry?	0: No 1: Somewhat 2: Yes
5. Bonus: Does the documentation of this project go above and beyond reasonable requirements? (check for areas that excelled) _____ (0-2)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Has extra effort been put into detailed steps/techniques/pictures? <input type="checkbox"/> Does the documentation show significant research? <input type="checkbox"/> Does the documentation give insight into the item with extra details on period practice or use? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the documentation of publishable quality?	0: Documentation showed no above and beyond efforts. 1: Documentation exceeded requirements in one bonus area 2: Documentation exceeded requirements in more than one bonus area

Play to the Judges

The judges have to assign scores on specific qualities of your project and your documentation is used to know how to score it. Consider putting in a paragraph on the various scoring areas to help out a judge.

- Authenticity and Creativity - How is your piece authentic and where did you put in modern elements (design/materials/tools/etc) and why.
- Complexity – How is your entry complex. Were there multiple steps required? Are there multiple elements? Were any of the techniques especially difficult?
- Workmanship – While much of this score relies on the judge examining your piece, feel free to point out where you achieved your goals. What were you happy with? What needs more work?

Other Sound Advice

- If you can't document your piece (i.e. if it was not meant to be an exact reproduction) then document the elements!
 - And if something is an anachronism, admit it and explain why you did it.
- If you do your documentation for a category right the first time, for other entries it only needs to be modified!
- There is such a thing as too much documentation!
 - Anything beyond 3 pages of text (not counting pictures, references) had better be very relevant, well organized and interesting. Often judges don't have time to read a dissertation.
 - If you are writing a research paper then enter alone it as a research paper.
 - Some projects take a lot of documenting because there may be many elements. Make sure to use a good format so that the judge can find the specific information that they are looking for.
 - Stay focused. A brief discussion (a paragraph for instance) on history of a material may be an interesting side-note, but unless it is key knowledge for your entry, no more is needed.
 - If you want to go into detail on aspects of your entry's history/creation/etc, put it in an appendix and refer to the appendix in your main body for more information.
 - If your documentation is going to be fairly long, put a summary on the first page for lazy judges.
- It doesn't matter what style you write in or how you cite sources (footnotes, MLA, fourth grade essay) so long as it is readable and accessible to your judge!
 - I like to use an outline format. Separate product, process, materials into different sections and label the sections well.
 - Braden likes to use footnotes. These are a good way to reference where your facts and theories come from.
 - Lists (instead of written out sentences) can be helpful.
- A picture is (often) worth 1000 words.
 - Diagrams, pictures of surviving works, pictures of the item or craft in manuscripts. All of these enhance documentation.
- Research before you Re-create!! (And remember where you found your research!)
- Have someone proofread/practice judge your documentation.
- Assume that your judge is not an expert in your area.
 - Explain technical terms and other things you might consider a "given".
 - If you are putting in very detailed descriptions that a learned judge wouldn't need, consider putting them in an appendix.
- Bring 3 copies of your documentation to a competition!!! That way judges don't have to share.

Sources:

Primary Source: Usually letters, records or other documents created during the period in question, such as diaries, legal notices or accounts. However, primary sources can include photographs, jewelry and other items.

- I SAW the chair in the museum and here are the pictures!
- Here is a picture of that manuscript page (primary source for manuscripts).
- Here is a copy of that recipe from the period source. (But the translation may well be secondary)

Secondary Source: Accounts of the past created by people who are not first-hand witnesses of the event. Secondary sources offer an analysis or a restatement of primary sources. Examples of secondary sources include: dictionaries, books and articles that interpret or review research works.

- 20,000 Years of Fashion references primary pictures but offers non-primary interpretations
- Here is a picture of that manuscript page (secondary source for items pictured in manuscript).
- Someone's SCA class handout or research paper can fall here or in tertiary resources. Try any see where they got their research.

Tertiary Source: a publication such as an encyclopedia or other compendium that sums up other secondary sources and primary sources. Many introductory textbooks may also be considered tertiary to the extent they sum up widely accepted results of large amounts of primary and secondary sources. Some tertiary sources are more reliable than others, and within any given tertiary source, some articles may be more reliable than others.

- Wikipedia is not all evil. However, it is a tertiary source and not 100% reliable. Including it in your sources will not help you. Try instead to follow it to more direct sources.
- An encyclopedia entry that asserts facts without going into sources is not a great reference.
- Many SCA class handouts are in this category.
- If at all possible, try to replace tertiary sources with secondary ones or at least with ones that have more sources for the assertions that they make.

References:

There is no required format for listing sources. It is just important to get all of the information in there. This is the format that I like to use:

Book: Author Last, First Name. Title/Subtitle of Book. City Published. Publisher. Year Published. ISBN.

Website: Website Title. Website address

Article in Journal: Author Last, First Name. *Title/Subtitle of Article*. Name of Journal/Magazine. Issue/Volume of Magazine. Date Published. Page(s).

Online Paper: Author Last, First Name. *Title/Subtitle of Paper*. Date Posted. Website address.

Manuscripts: *Manuscript Title*. Institution Found At, Institution Location, Stack address, (web address for online access).