

OHIO
HISTORY DAY

Student Guide





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Hi! Wherever you see me, print that page to work on!



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Getting Started

Welcome to Ohio History Day! This guide is designed to help you become a historian as you explore a topic that interests you and turn your research into a History Day project. You'll learn how to choose and narrow down a topic, ask thoughtful research questions, find and evaluate reliable sources, build an argument and connect your research with this year's theme. Whether you create an exhibit, documentary, performance, website or paper, this guide will give you tools and strategies to help you develop a project that is informed by evidence, meaningful to you and tells an important story about the past.

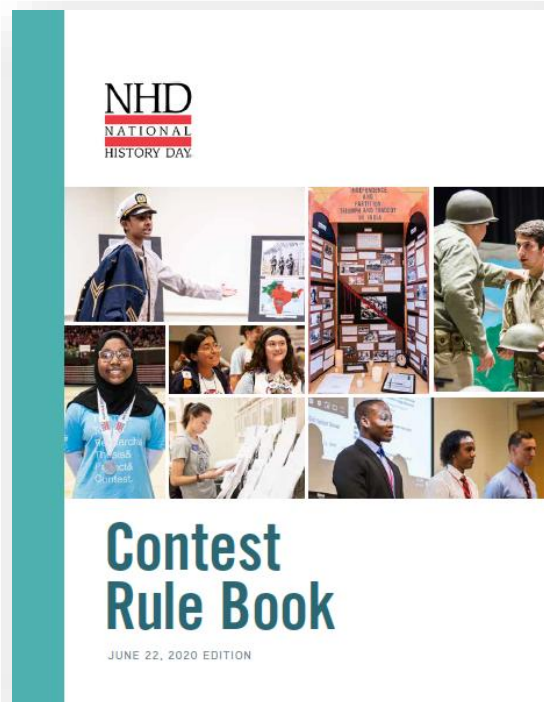
What is National History Day?

History Day is not your normal class project. History Day lets you do the work of a real historian. You choose your topic, study primary sources, think about what you've found and come up with your own conclusions. The best part about History Day? You decide how you want to show your research through a paper, website, documentary, performance or exhibit.

The History Day Contest Rule Book

After choosing your category, it is important to consult the History Day [Contest Rule Book](#) for complete information on the rules that relate to your entry. The Contest Rule Book also describes the judging criteria for evaluating all History Day entries.

Additionally, the Contest Rule Book explains how entries will be evaluated. The evaluation has two sections: Historical Quality (80%) and Clarity of Presentation (20%). The evaluation forms for each category are available at <https://nhd.org/en/contest/contest-rules/>.



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The Annual History Day Theme

Every History Day Project must follow a theme. NHD picks a new theme each year. Following the theme helps you focus your research. Topics can be about something local or worldwide. They can be about something far in the past or more recent. You get to choose!

To start exploring this year's theme, check out the following pages. You'll find a theme overview, ideas for local history topics and example topic explorations to help you spark ideas for your own project.



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Innovation in History: Impact, Influence, Change Theme Overview

This year's National History Day theme allows you to look at topics from all over the world and in many areas of study. As you dive deeper into your research, you'll find that this is a complex and thought-provoking theme. We've broken down this year's theme to help you choose a topic and begin your research.

What is an innovation?

If we take the simple definition, then we could think of innovation as **a new idea, method or device**. This may lead us to think that the best topics this year will focus on inventions and inventors, but that's only a small part of innovation! Innovation can also include social, political, cultural and intellectual advances. Invention does involve discovering or creating something new, but in order for something to be an innovation, it needs to take that new idea and apply it in a way that changes the way we live our lives and society as we know it.

Let's look at the electric light bulb as an example. Thomas Edison's invention of the light bulb is exciting on its own, but it's the change to society that really makes it an innovation. Before the light bulb, the activities of our daily lives were more closely tied to the rising and setting of the sun due to the general weakness of light sources like candles, oil lamps, and gas lighting. The widespread use of lightbulbs led to the creation of the modern power grid, enabled round-the-clock indoor work, and influenced a whole new type of inventions that transformed homes and businesses.

Impact, Influence, Change

This year's theme encourages you to explore not only an innovation itself, but also its impact, influence and change. These three ideas are closely connected, but each helps us to ask different questions about the past.

An innovation can create change. That change can have an impact on people or society and influence what happens next in history.

Change= What became different. What was different after the innovation than before? Are those changes still visible today?

Example: The telephone made it possible for people to communicate over long distances much more quickly.

Impact= What happened because of the innovation. What happened because of this innovation? Who or what was affected right away?

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Example: The telephone influenced the development of new communication technologies.

Influence= How did the innovation affect people, ideas, or future developments. What other innovations, movements, or events grew out of this one? How did it encourage others to think or act differently?

Example: The telephone changed how people communicated, conducted business and maintained relationships.

Although impact, influence and change can be looked at separately, looking at them together reveals the complete story by showing how an innovation affected people in the moment, influenced future ideas and developments and created lasting changes that continue to shape the world today.

For example, Cincinnati's King Records challenged racial barriers by becoming one of the first major recording companies where Black and white musicians worked together in integrated recording sessions. At a time when segregation was common, this innovation influenced the music industry and demonstrated how collaboration across racial lines could help shape American culture.

Multiple Perspectives

When deciding which topic to research, it's important to think about multiple perspectives. Innovations can often affect different people in different ways. Looking at the experiences of inventors, users, supporters and critics reveal not only how the innovation changed the world, but also the challenges people faced in creating, adopting or benefiting from each innovation.

Take Garrett Morgan and his early gas mask. Morgan developed a life-saving innovation, but he had trouble selling it because as a Black inventor in the 1900s, many white people didn't want to buy his product. While firefighters and rescue workers benefited from his invention, Morgan himself often encountered discrimination and had to navigate barriers that white inventors did not. Examining both the impact of his invention and the obstacles he faced provides a deeper understanding of how innovation and social inequality have shaped history.

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Ohio Local History Topics

History happens every day and in your own backyard! In fact, Ohio has played an essential role in both U.S. and world history. We've put together a list of Ohio topics that fit this year's NHD theme, *Innovation in History: Impact, Influence, Change*. Be sure to check out some example topics, marked with asterisk (*), after the local history list!

African American History

- Brigadier General Charles Young- First African American man to achieve the rank of colonel in the U.S. Army
- Carl B. Stokes- First African American mayor of a major US city
- Charlene Mitchell- first African American woman candidate to run for President of the United States
- Ohio in the Underground Railroad
- Abolitionists and active on the Underground Railroad- Levi Coffin, John P. Parker, John Rankin, Henry Boyd
- **Garrett Morgan (p.12)**
- AME Church (see Dr. Cheryl LaRoche)
- W.C.A. No. 2—First African American branch of the YWCA in the nation
- Wilberforce University—First Black owned and operated private HBCU

American Indian History

- Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks
- American Indian Movement, 1960s/70s
- American Indian Religious Freedom Act, 1978
- American Indian Wars, 1789-1795
- French Indian Wars, 1754-1763
- Haudenosaunee Confederation
- Michikinikwa, or Little Turtle, leader of the Myaamia
- Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, 1990
- Tecumseh- leader of the Shawnee
- Western Confederacy

Diplomatic History

- King Philip's War, 1675-1678
- Constitutional Conventions, 1851, 1870, 1912
- The Dayton Accord
- Toledo War & the Frostbitten Convention, 1835-1836
- Treaty of Greenville, 1795
- War of 1812

Economic History

- Baldemar Velasquez – American labor union activist and co-founder of Farm Labor Organizing Committee, AFL-CIO.
- **Building of the Miami & Erie Canal (p. 11)**
- Cincinnati meatpacking "Porkopolis," 1840-1875
- Cleveland Strike at General Motors
- Construction of the National Road in Ohio, 1825-1838
- Formation of the United Auto Workers
- Panic of 1907 & the founding of the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland
- United Mine Workers coal strike of 1919 in Ohio
- Youngstown "Little Steel" Strike – Led to the formation of the United Steels Workers Union
- Valentine B. Horton- influential in developing Ohio river commerce

Environmental History

- National Environment Policy Act, 1970
- The Great Flood of 1913 & the Ohio Conservancy Law
- Scioto River pollution

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- The Wilderness Act of 1964
- L. L. Langstroth- father of American beekeeping

Political History

- Benjamin Lundy – Abolitionist, publisher of antislavery newspapers
- Brandenburg v. Ohio, 1969
- Columbus Board of Education v. Penick, 1979
- Equality Foundation of Cincinnati vs. City of Cincinnati, 1997
- Florence Ellinwood Allen – First woman elected to the Ohio Supreme Court and first to serve on the Supreme Court of any state
- Joshua R. Giddings – Abolitionist, one of the founders and member of the Republican Party
- Kent State University shootings, 1970
- Mapp v. Ohio, 1961
- Maxwell's Code, 1795
- Ohio Black Codes & Ohio Black Laws, 1804 & 1807 respectively
- Ohio Civil Rights Act of 1959
- Ohio Public Accommodations Law of 1884
- Ohio Statehood, 1803
- Stonewall Union (now known as Stonewall Columbus)
- The Bing Act, 1921
- The Northwest Ordinance, 1787

Science, Technology, and Medical History

- Powel Crosley Jr.- Radio broadcasting pioneer
- AIDS Task Force of Greater Cleveland
- Albert Sabin & the invention of the oral polio vaccine
- Ella P. Stewart – First African American female pharmacist in the U.S.
- Apollo 11 Ohioans- Neil Armstrong, Rita Rapp, Dominick Labino
- Thomas Edison – Menlo Park laboratory & his inventions
- Willem Kolff – Cleveland Clinic doctor who invented kidney dialysis
- Ephraim Shay- developed the Shay engine
- Wilbur, Orville, and Katharine Wright-

aviation pioneers

- Charles Goodyear- vulcanized rubber
- Leslie Peltier- amateur astronomer and inventor
- Cleveland Abbe- America's first weather forecaster

Social & Cultural History

- **Ohio State School for the Blind (OSSB) (p.8)**
- Red Power' – Pan Indian Identity, 1960s
- Cleveland Black Gay Pride Weekends
- Harry C. Smith – Journalist & Legislator who championed Civil Rights in Ohio
- Jean O'Leary – one of the founders of National Coming Out Day
- Jerry Siegel & Joe Shuster- creators of the "first superhero," Superman
- Jesse Owens & 1936 Berlin Olympics
- **King Records (p.10)**
- Lane Seminary Debates
- Lockbourne Army Air Force Base (Columbus) – Tuskegee Airmen
- McGuffey Readers – standardized textbook for students around the country in 18th century
- National Football League
- Natalie Clifford Barney – American playwright, poet and novelist
- Paul Laurence Dunbar– African American Poet and activist
- Protest & labor songs of Appalachian coal miners
- Toni Morrison, author & first African American woman to win the Nobel prize in literature
- United Freedom Movement
- American Studio Glass Movement

Women's History

- 19th Amendment
- Betsy Mix Cowles
- **Electra Doren (p.9)**
- Gloria Steinem
- Lucy Stone
- Oberlin College – First college to admit women and one of the first to admit African Americans
- Ohio Women's Convention at Salem
- Victoria Woodhull



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Ohio State School for the Blind (OSSB)

Background:

Prior to the 18th century, education for the blind and visually impaired was limited. Education for this population was usually done by self-trained tutors and reserved for the children of the wealthy. This began to change in the United States in 1829 with the establishment of the Perkins School for the Blind in Massachusetts.

Following the example of the Perkins School, Ohio established the Ohio Institution for the Education for the Blind in 1837, making it the first state-sponsored public school for the blind in the United States. 11 students enrolled that first year and between 1839 and 1901, 2,058 students enrolled in the school.

In the early 1900s, the school became known as the Ohio State School for the Blind (OSSB). Students from the age of 3-21 have attended and received an education ranging from kindergarten through 12th grade.



"Ohio State School for the Blind - Salisbury Cathedral [model]." Ohio Memory <https://ohiomemory.org/digital/collection/p267401coll34/id/5966>

OSSB used innovative teaching methods and resources designed specifically for their students. Students learned through Braille texts as well as specialized tools like tactile Work Projects Administration models which helped students physically experience historic buildings and concepts.

Questions to Consider:

- What impact did the creation of the OSSB have on access to public education in the United States?
- How did the school influence society's understanding of what blind and visually impaired individuals could achieve?
- How has OSSB used innovative teaching methods and resources to improve education for students?
- What lasting impact has the OSSB had on education, accessibility and disability rights in Ohio and the United States?



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Electra C. Doren

Background:

Electra Doren was the Chief Librarian for the Dayton Library at the turn of the 20th century. During her tenure, she was responsible for many innovative updates and changes to the library system including reorganizing the cataloging system, starting a library training school, and starting one of the first book wagons in the United States.



"Head Librarian at Dayton Public Library, Electra C. Doren. Dayton Metro Library" Society of Ohio Archivists.
https://ohioarchivists.org/2023-archives-month-poster-results/6_dayton_library/

Doren was Chief Librarian at the Dayton Library from 1896-1905. When she first started working for the library, only librarians were allowed access to the book stacks and would go retrieve books for the public. Doren reorganized the library cataloging system using the Dewey Decimal System which allowed the library shelves to be open for public use. She also expanded the public's use of the library by opening the first branches of the library and began one of the first book wagons in the United States. This allowed the more rural, outlying areas of Dayton to have access to the library's books.

Doren also used her skills to influence the field of library science.

She was responsible for opening a library training school, only the second of its kind in the country. Additionally, she served on the American Library Association Executive board, an organization that influenced libraries across the country. She also founded and served as the president of the Ohio Library Association.

Outside of her work in libraries, Doren was also active in the women's suffrage movement. She donated her extensive collection of women's suffrage materials to the Dayton library. It is the basis of their Women's Suffrage Collection, one of the biggest suffrage collections in the U.S.

Questions to Consider:

- How is Doren's work reorganizing the library system and opening a book wagon an innovative effort to provide access to library resources? How did this change the way people access information in the long term?
- What influence did Doren have on the field of library science in Ohio and across the United States?
- Doren was also a suffragist. How did her actions reflect broader Progressive Era efforts for social changes and women's rights?

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King Records

Background:

King Records, active from 1943-1971, was an important record label, with over 500 singles hitting the charts and 32 Number 1 singles. Located in Cincinnati, King Records recorded a variety of music genres like Appalachian folk, jazz, soul, bluegrass, R&B and country. Artists that recorded with King Records include James Brown, Hank Ballard and the Midnighters, Bootsy Collins, and the Delmore Brothers.



"King Records Employees, c. 1950" Underground Railroad Freedom Center
<https://stories.cincinnati-preservation.org/files/show/110>

The label brought together groups of musicians that would normally not have the opportunity to work together. For example, white Appalachian migrants and Black musicians connected to the Great Migration in a way that encouraged collaboration and crossover recordings in the different genres which helped to shape a new hybrid style of music and some of the earliest forms of rock n' roll.

Not only was King Records a record label, but it also recorded, manufactured, distributed and promoted its own music. It was one of the first racially integrated businesses in Cincinnati at a time when informal segregation and discrimination were common. Black employees held positions in all aspects of the record label, from working the record press to key creative and managerial positions.

Innovative hiring practices, both in the production of records and in the musicians King Records represented, created an environment that pushed toward economic, social, and racial equity all while changing the music landscape.

Questions to Consider:

- How did Cincinnati's unique geographic location between the North and South influence King Records' hiring practices and musical production?
- How did crossover recordings between genres lead to innovation in American music?
- How did King Records use innovative hiring and business practices to create new opportunities for Black employees and musicians?



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Ohio Canal System

Background:

The Ohio canal system, consisting of 813 miles of canals, is an innovative system that created great economic change in the region. Built between 1825 and 1847, the canal system consists of two major canals: the Ohio and Erie Canal which connects Lake Erie in Cleveland to the Ohio River in Portsmouth and the Miami and Erie Canal which connects Cincinnati to Toledo. At a time when Ohio was part of the frontier, the canal system connected settlers to the rest of the nation and marked the beginning of a national transportation system.



"19th-century image of a canal boat on the Ohio and Erie Canal in Greater Akron" Ohio DNR <https://ohiodnr.gov/discover-and-learn/safety-conservation/about-ODNR/real-estate/canal->

Construction of the canals happened at a time when Ohio was suffering financial hardships after the War of 1812. The canals were an important avenue for trade and commerce, but most importantly significantly reduced the cost of transporting goods. Before the canal system, it could take more than a month for settlers to get their goods to markets back east. Once the canal systems were functioning, Ohioans were able to move goods more easily to national and international

markets which increased trade and economic activity in the area.

Not only did the canals allow for the movement of goods, but it allowed for the movement of people as well. Cities grew along the canal routes, and the improved economic landscape made Ohio a destination for settlers.

Questions to Consider:

- How was the Ohio canal system and innovative form of transportation in the early 1800s?
- What challenges did workers face when building the canal system and how were those challenges overcome?
- How did the construction of the canals reflect innovation in engineering and infrastructure during the 19th century?
- How did the canal system change everyday life for the people living in Ohio and those who moved to Ohio?

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Garrett Morgan

Background:

Garrett Morgan was a prolific inventor and businessman in Cleveland who is best known for creating a manual traffic signal and an early gas mask.



"Garrett Morgan" Scholastic
<https://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/bhstory/inventors/morgan.htm>

Morgan was a teenager when he moved to Cincinnati where he found work as a handyman. A few years later he moved to Cleveland and went into business for himself with a sewing machine repair shop.

In 1914, Morgan patented his safety hood, a precursor to the gas mask, and went on to use it to rescue workers trapped in a tunnel under Lake Erie after a gas explosion at the Cleveland Waterworks. Even though his invention had the potential to save lives, Morgan had trouble selling his devices because people refused to buy products from a Black inventor. Because of this, Morgan changed his business practices including renaming the device and hiring white actors to promote the product.

Morgan is also famous for his invention of the manual traffic signal. After witnessing a collision between a horse-drawn carriage and another vehicle in 1923, Morgan created a three-way traffic signal that allowed vehicles to safely pass through an intersection without risking a collision.

In addition to his inventions, Morgan was a well-known figure in the African American community in Cleveland. He helped found the Cleveland Association of Colored Men, established the all-Black Wakeman Country Club and co-founded the Cleveland Call, a newspaper that was the predecessor of Cleveland's major African American newspaper.

Questions to Consider:

- In what ways did Morgan's innovative solutions to problems change the lives of those around him and society as a whole?
- Morgan worked during the Segregation Era. How did this shape the challenges he faced as an inventor?
- How did Morgan use entrepreneurship and innovation to create opportunities for himself and others?
- How did Morgan's work reflect broader changes taking place in the early 20th century, such as urbanization and industrialization?



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Selecting a Topic

The key to an effective History Day entry is the combination of a good topic with good research. Here are some things to think about in selecting a topic for History Day.

- **Interest.** You will spend a lot of time researching, thinking and writing about your topic, so make sure it's something you are interested in and want to learn more about! If you're working in a group, all members should agree on the topic.
- **Theme Connection.** Your topic needs to have a connection to the History Day theme. If nothing comes to mind at first, you can start researching your interests and see where you find a connection.
- **Available Information.** For some topics, it can be difficult to find primary sources. This can be especially true of really old topics, little-known topics, or topics where most of the information is in a different language. Make sure you can gather enough information to make an argument.
- **Your topic has historical significance.** In a successful History Day project, you'll need to be able to show how your topic was important in history. This doesn't mean you need to do your project on something world-famous. Even local topics can influence history. We do recommend that you pick a topic that happened at least 20 years ago. For anything earlier, it may be too soon to know what significance it has had in history.

Use the worksheet on the next page to help you brainstorm some topics that interest you and could fit into this year's theme.



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WORKSHEET: TOPIC BRAINSTORM

Topics can come from many different places. They can come from something you learned in class, a hobby or interests, or even a piece of family history. Use the list below to come up with some ideas. Then, think of which topics you can connect to this year's theme. From those you can pick your favorite to start researching.

Who are some historical figures you admire or are fascinated by (ex. Amelia Earhart, Hellen Keller, Jesse Owens)?

Do you have any interests or hobbies you want to find out the history of (ex. music, art, sports)?

What era of History have you always wanted to know more about (ex. The Great Depression, Reconstruction, the 1960s)?

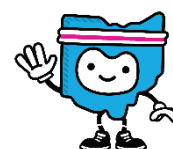
What movements would you like to know more about (ex. Women's Suffrage, Civil Rights, Worker's Rights)?

What famous invention have you wondered about (ex. the printing press, the telegraph, the airplane)?

What specific historical events are you interested in (ex. the Civil War, the sinking of the Titanic, the Moon landing)?

What place or region in the world do you want to visit?

Is there a piece of family or local history you'd like to explore?





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Narrowing your Topic

Once you know your topic of interest, the next step is to narrow it down. As you begin your research, you might find that there's a ton of information on a topic. All History Day projects have a word or time limit. This means you need to focus your project to fit everything in. This will also help you make a strong historical argument.

Follow these steps to narrow down your topic:

1. Start with your General Interest: Think about a broad subject that interests you. This could be a person, event, place, idea, movement, or issue.
2. Choose a Broad Topic: Pick one part of your general interest to study. Avoid trying to cover the entire subject.
3. Decide "Where" and "When"? Identify the time period and location that you want to focus on. You may need to narrow your topic to a specific place or period.
4. Narrow your topic further. Choose a specific aspect of your topic that you want to investigate.

Take a look at how we've narrowed down some example topics on the next few pages.

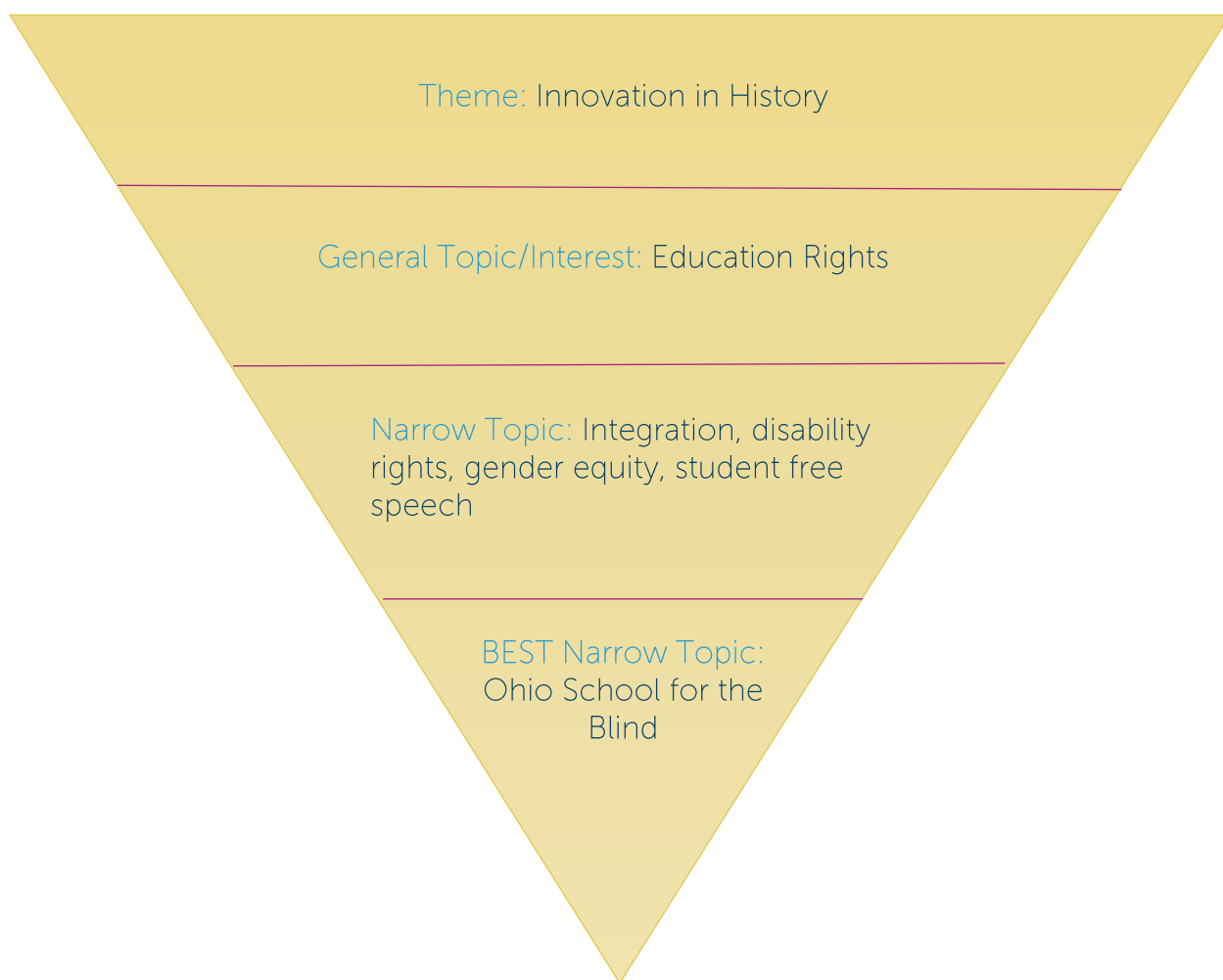


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Topic Graphic Organizer: EXAMPLE 1

Now that you've started thinking about innovations that have shaped history, let's see how the funnel graphic organizer can help you turn a broad idea into a focused research topic. In this example, we'll start with a broad area of innovation and gradually narrow it down to a specific invention, person, discovery, or idea. As you look at the example, notice how each step makes the topic more specific and gives you a clearer opportunity to explore its impact, influence, and change.



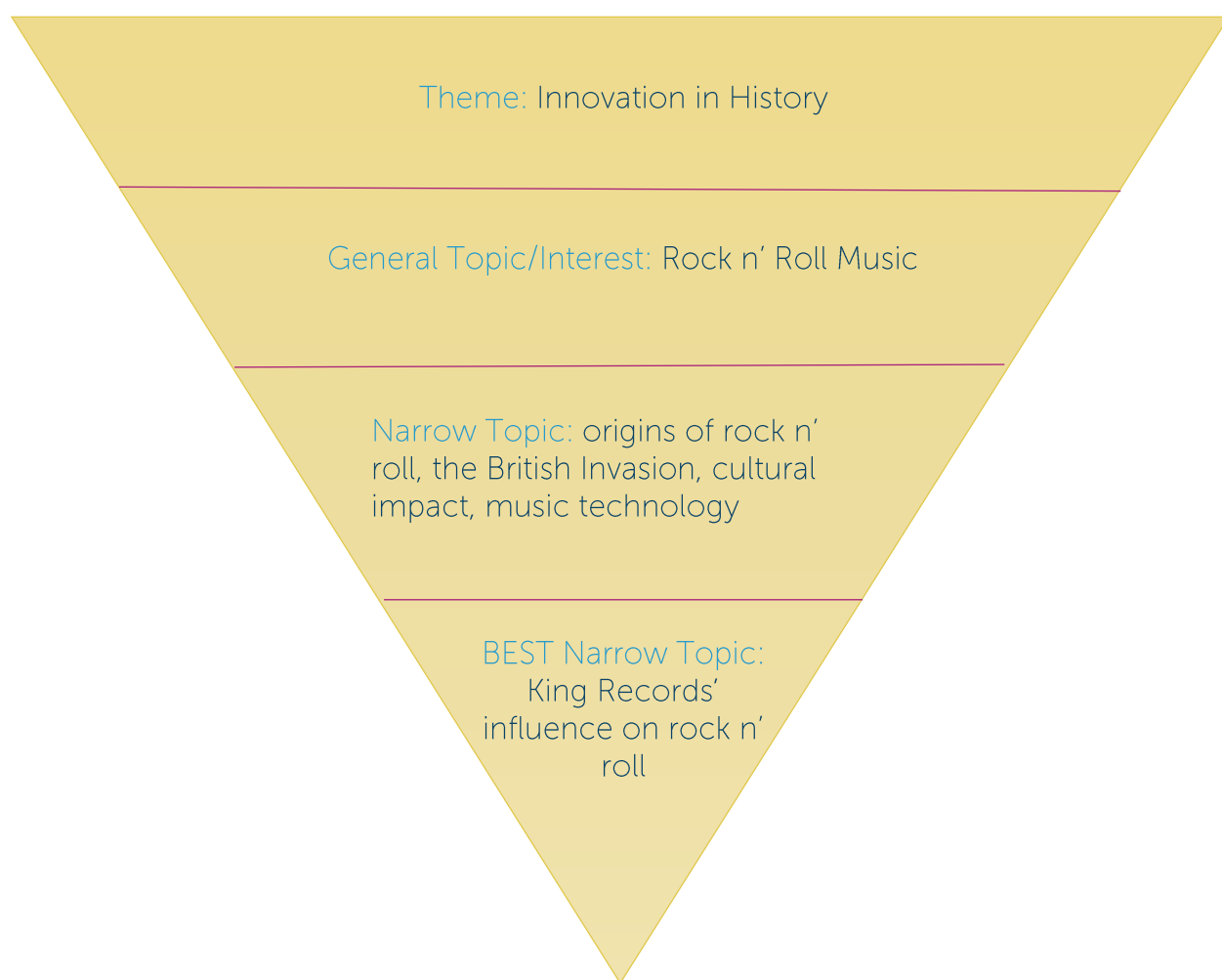


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Topic Graphic Organizer: EXAMPLE 2

Now that you've started thinking about innovations that have shaped history, let's see how the funnel graphic organizer can help you turn a broad idea into a focused research topic. In this example, we'll start with a broad area of innovation and gradually narrow it down to a specific invention, person, discovery, or idea. As you look at the example, notice how each step makes the topic more specific and gives you a clearer opportunity to explore its impact, influence, and change.



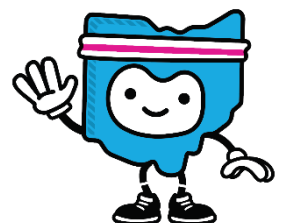
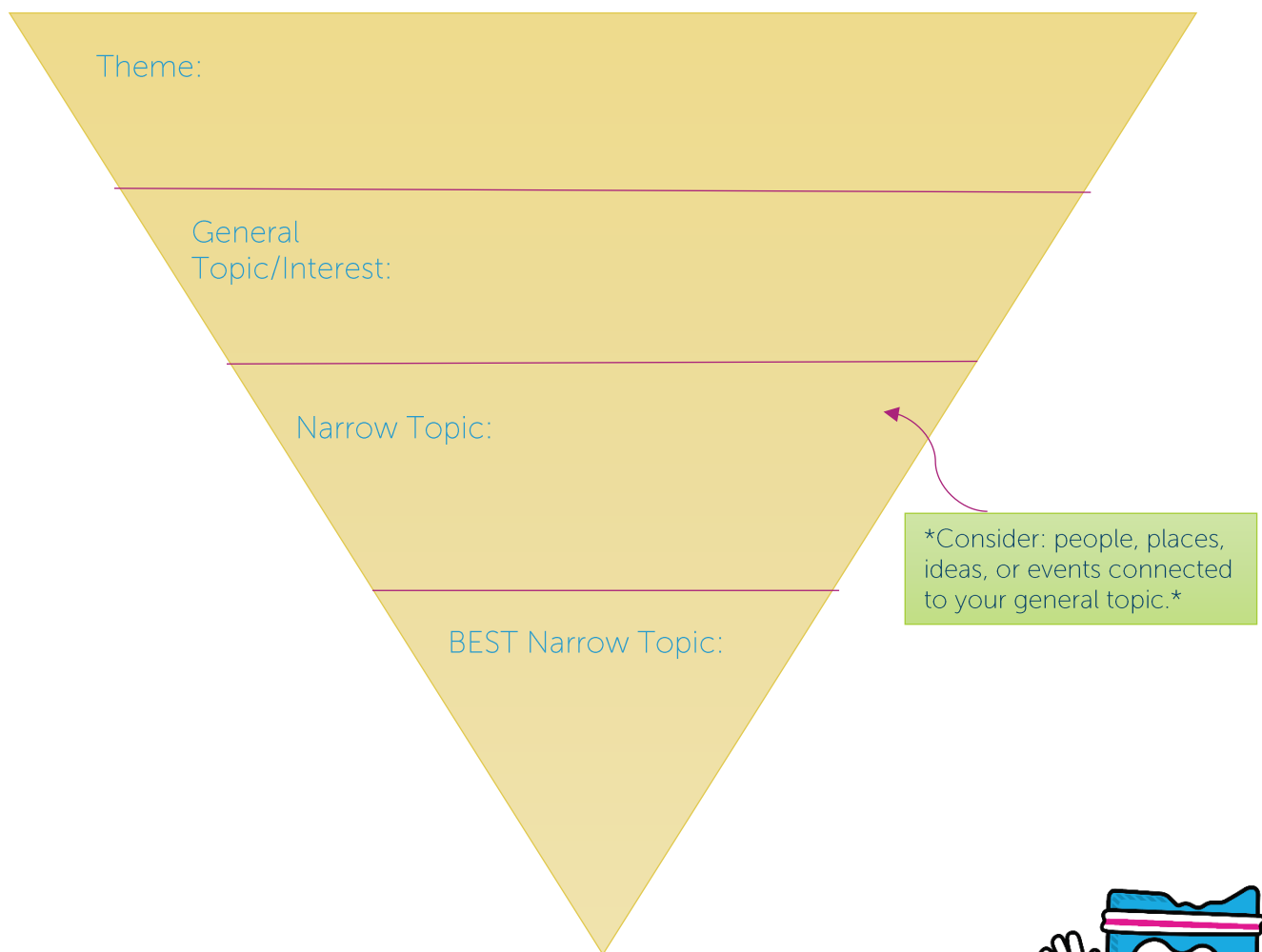


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Topic Graphic Organizer

Innovations have shaped history in countless ways. Some innovations create immediate change, while others influence people, ideas, and events over many years. Every innovation has an impact, but that impact can be positive, negative, or a combination of both. Rather than trying to research an entire field of innovation—such as transportation, medicine, or communication—look for a specific invention, individual, discovery, or idea that interests you. A focused topic will allow you to better analyze how an innovation made an impact, influenced others, and created change throughout history. Use the funnel graphic organizer below to help you narrow down your ideas.





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Conducting Research

Time to Become a Detective!

Before diving into your initial research, it is important to understand the difference between primary and secondary sources. This section will cover those definitions and provide some examples, while giving you some places to start your research.

Primary & Secondary Sources

When historians study a topic, they try to gather a wide variety of sources. Historians use sources like a detective uses evidence. Both need information to “make their case”. But not all sources are the same. Historians divide their sources into two groups: Primary and Secondary. You are going to need to use both types of sources for a good History Day project.

Secondary Sources

Secondary sources are written by someone who did not see or take part in an event. Most books, encyclopedias, and websites are secondary sources. Secondary sources are useful because they can give background about your topic. The footnotes and bibliographies of secondary sources can also lead you to primary sources.

Examples of Secondary Sources

- Biographies
- Encyclopedias
- History Textbooks
- Media Documentaries
- Books about the Topic
- Interviews with scholars/experts
- Articles about the topic
- Websites

Primary Sources

Primary Sources are items that give first-hand information about a person or event. A primary source might be something written or made during the time you are studying. It could also be a written or recorded interview with a person who lived through a historical event.

Examples of Primary Sources

- Historic Objects
- Manuscript Collections
- Interview with Eyewitnesses
- Autobiographies
- Government Records
- Newspapers from the Era
- Letters
- Photographs
- Music of the Era
- Original Film Footage



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Be Sure to Consult the NHD Rule Book

For more tips and examples of primary and secondary sources, check out pages 9-11 in the [NHD Rule Book](#).

Research Strategy & Finding Sources

In order to be able to use your research later, you need to decide on a way to organize it. You should think about the following:

1. How and where you're going to look for information.
2. What you'll do to record what you find.

Where should I start?

A good place to start is in your school library. The librarian there can help you find trustworthy sources to help get you on the right track. Here are some other places to check out:

- **City, County or College Libraries.** These libraries have more resources than school libraries. They are especially helpful because they may have primary sources, such as old newspapers.
- **Historical Societies.** If your topic is on Ohio history, a historical society may be helpful. State and local historical societies focus on collecting information about Ohio. Some historical societies and archives also have special collections that relate to national topics.
- **Historical Sites.** If your topic is local, you may be able to visit the place where it happened. Historical sites let you see what it was like during the time period. You may also be able to see objects and pictures from the time which can help you understand historical context.
- **Interviews.** If people connected to your topic are still living, you can conduct oral history interviews with them. Contact your interview subject to set up a time and place to meet. Write your questions beforehand and be prepared to take notes or record the interview. If you cannot meet in person, you can send those questions in the mail, by email, over the phone, or by video chat. Make sure to send a thank you note to them after the interview.
 - Keep in mind, interviews are not required for History Day projects.
 - **Important Rules Consideration:** You may be tempted to interview a professional historian about your topic. Do not. Your job as a researcher is to read that historian's work. Historians generally do not interview other historians. Instead, consider using or conducting an oral history, if possible. Learn more at nhd.org/guidelines-conducting-interviews.

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Using the Internet for History Day Research

The internet is a valuable tool for beginning your History Day research. You can use the internet to gather general information, narrow your topic and locate some primary source materials.

Sites such as the Library of Congress, the Digital Public Library and Ohio Memory are good examples of trustworthy websites that have a lot of primary source materials. You can also use the internet to take a look at library and archive collections before you visit.

Be Careful!

There are a lot of websites that do not have good information. You should check anything you read on a website against at least one other source.

Here are some questions you can ask yourself about websites:

- What is this site about?
- Who made the site?
- Where did they get their information from?
- When was this site made?
- How accurate is this page?

Research Plan & Staying Organized

Information is only useful if you can find and use it later. One way to organize your research is to use note cards. Use one set of cards to record notes and quotes that you find in your sources. Use a different set of cards to write the citation for the source. Here are examples of index cards for a citation and research notes about journalist Nellie Bly.

Bibliography Cards track the sources you used. Fill these out as you use each source. It will make your life easier when you create your bibliography later.

Note Cards track your notes, ideas, and quotes.

Groppo, Martha. "Uncovering Nellie Bly." Kaleidoscope 10.41 (2012): 1-12. Print.

This source is a peer-reviewed article published in the University of Kentucky journal, Kaleidoscope. This is a biography about Nellie and specifically mentions information about her detractors. I will use this source to talk about her detractors in my paper.

Nellie Bly's career as an investigative reporter

Nellie Bly was one of the first female investigative reporters and went to great strides to make her case to the reader. "Bly's investigative journalism captured the minds and hearts of her readers" (Stevens)



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Developing a Historical Argument

For a History Day project to be successful, you need to do more than report facts. You need to dive a little deeper into your research and create a historical argument. A historical argument is an informed opinion on your topic. It should be supported with evidence from your sources. Your argument should also say why your topic is historically significant. Why is your topic important? In what ways did it affect people at the time? How did it change history? In other words, so what?

Writing Research Questions

Successful research involves more than just finding all the information out there about a topic. You will never be able to find—or read—all this information. Having a narrow topic will help you to keep your project to a manageable size, but you can focus your research and project even more by developing research questions.

Like any good detective, you have to have the right questions to guide your research. Good historical research questions will allow you to investigate issues of cause and effect, change over time, differences in perspective, etc. What were the causes of past events? What were the effects? How did past decisions or actions affect future choices? What has changed?

- **Research questions are different than information-seeking questions.** Information-seeking questions help you to understand the basic facts about your topic. When was the 19th amendment passed? Who was the first president of the United States? How does a bill become a law? You will likely answer these questions just by reading an encyclopedia article about your topic.
- **Ask questions as you research.** As you begin examining sources, write down any questions that come to mind. For instance, once you learn the basic facts related to the 19th amendment, you might still be curious about certain things. Why was the 19th amendment passed in 1919 and not earlier? How was women's role in society viewed at the time, and where did that view come from? What effects did the 19th amendment have on American politics, society, and culture? Did the passing of the 19th amendment impact all women? These open-ended questions will guide further research and may give you an idea of what primary sources to look for.
- **Develop your historical argument from your research questions.** As you find sources that relate to your research questions, carefully think about what the information is telling you. Then, after careful analysis, try to come up with **your own** answers to your question based on that evidence. This will be the basis for your historical argument.

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- **Research is an ongoing process.** Research doesn't stop as soon as you have a historical argument. As you find more information, develop your argument, and revise your project, you may change your research questions or develop new ones.

Strong research questions help you to build a complete story about your topic. Check out the chart below to see how you can move beyond simply asking **what happened** and explore what led to your topic, how people responded, what changed, and why the topic matters in history.

Project Timeline	Sample: King Records
Long Before - What outside people, ideas or events were going on to influence your topic? - What other information does your viewer need to know to understand the background of your topic?	- How did segregation and racial discrimination affect the United States? - What was happening politically, socially, and economically in Cincinnati during this time? - How did African American music traditions help to develop different genres in the music industry?
Right Before - What outside people, ideas or events were going on to influence your topic? - What other information does your viewer need to know to understand the background of your topic?	- What was the music industry like in the U.S. in the late 1930s and 1940s? - What opportunities and challenges did Black musicians face in the recording industry at this time? - What ideas and changes were happening in American society? - How did segregation affect where musicians could perform, record, and promote their music?
Main Event What happened?	- Why was King Records founded in Cincinnati? - How did King Records bring together artists and musical styles that were often separated by racial barriers? - How did King Records respond to barriers to musicians working in the recording industry?
Right After (Short-term Impact) - What are some of the reactions to the main event? Include both positive and negative. - Did anything change right away?	- How did audiences respond to King Records' artists? What about the music industry? - What immediate opportunities did King Records create for artists? - How did the company's integrated work environment challenge common practices?
Long After (Long-term Impact) - How are things different because of the topic? - Did this topic influence other historical events? - Why is this topic more important in history?	- How did King Records influence the development of popular music? - How did the company's approach to working across racial barriers influence society?



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WORKSHEET: RESEARCH QUESTION DEVELOPMENT

Use the chart to develop research questions that will help you explore your topic from different points in time. These questions should help you investigate what led to your topic, what happened, how people responded, what changed and why your topic matters in history.

Project Timeline	Your Topic:
Long Before - What outside people, ideas or events were going on to influence your topic? - What other information does your viewer need to know to understand the background of your topic?	
Right Before - What outside people, ideas or events were going on to influence your topic? - What other information does your viewer need to know to understand the background of your topic?	
Main Event What happened?	
Right After (Short-term Impact) - What are some of the reactions to the main event? Include both positive and negative. - Did anything change right away?	
Long After (Long-term Impact) - How are things different because of the topic? - Did this topic influence other historical events? - Why is this topic more important in history?	



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Tips for a Strong Historical Argument (Your Thesis)

Keep it Short and Sweet. In your intro, make sure you don't give more detail than you need. You want to include just enough for the reader to make sense of your argument but not distract from it.

Connect to the Theme. The theme is a large part of how your History Day project will be judged. It is important to clearly state your connection to the theme right away. It is often a good idea to use words from the year's theme in the argument itself, if it makes sense.

Use Your Own Voice. Your historical argument should be unique to you. It is okay to get ideas from your sources, but your argument should show your own thoughts and ideas. We want to hear what **you** have to say!

Don't be Afraid to Change. As you do more research and find more information, your ideas on your topic might change. Your historical argument should change to show this. Remember, your argument needs to be supported by the historical evidence!

Remember to Include the Historical Context. Nothing in history happened in isolation. Every topic was influenced by people, ideas or events that came before it. The impacts of every topic went on to influence other people, ideas, and events. This relationship of a topic to the environment surrounding it is called historical context.

OHD Hot Tip!

For this year's theme, you do not have to include all three of the theme words in your thesis or project. However, if your topic does involve impact, influence, and change you should be sure to include all three. Your thesis will be your guide!



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Is This a Thesis Statement?

A thesis statement does more than tell your reader what your project is about. It makes an argument about why your topic matters in history. As you look at the examples below, notice how each one becomes stronger. The first statement introduces the topic but does not make an argument. The second makes a claim about the topic but does not explain its historical significance. The third goes further by making an argument about why the topic is significant, what changed because of it, and how it connects to the theme. A strong thesis should be something you can support with evidence from your research.

Example:

1. King Records was an important record company in Cincinnati, Ohio from the 1940s through the 1970s.
 - This introduces the topic to the reader but does not make an argument as to why the topic is historically significant.
2. King Records helped break down racial barriers in the music industry by bringing Black and white musicians and employees together.
 - This makes an argument, but it still does not show historical significance. It needs to show how King Records' approach to racial integration created lasting change.
3. King Records challenged racial segregation in the music industry by creating an integrated workplace where Black and white musicians, employees, and artists worked together at a time when segregation was common in American society. This innovative approach helped break down racial barriers in the music business, influenced the development of an integrated music industry and demonstrated how business could create social change through racial integration.
 - This thesis makes an argument for why this topic is historically significant. It can be supported by evidence from primary and secondary sources. It also more clearly states the connection to the theme by using words from the theme itself.

Take a look at how we've built thesis statements on the next few pages.

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Build a Historical Argument: EXAMPLE 1

Take a look at how we've built our thesis statement that explains what happened, what changed, and why the topic matters in history.

Remember, the thesis statement should include:

background topic/theme words immediate impact long-term significance

Here is the draft of a thesis statement:

Historical Background: Prior to the 18th century, students who were blind or visually impaired were usually taught by self-trained tutors and reserved for children of the wealthy.

Innovation: Impact, Influence, Change: Opened in 1837, the Ohio State School for the Blind transformed education through innovative, specialized instruction and accessible learning tools.

Immediate Impact: The school provided state-funded education to students who had previously been excluded from public schools.

Long-Term Significance: The school led to long term impacts on the equity of education for students including the creation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Here is the full thesis statement:

Before the 18th century, educational opportunities for students who were blind or visually impaired were limited to wealthy families who could afford private tutors. The opening of the Ohio State School for the Blind in 1837 transformed education through innovative, state-funded specialized instruction and accessible learning tools, providing educational opportunities for students who had previously been excluded from public schools. Its impact extended far beyond Ohio, influencing the development of specialized education, expanding educational equity for students with disabilities, and changing how schools across the United States approached accessibility and inclusion.

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Build a Historical Argument: EXAMPLE 2

Take a look at how we've built our thesis statement that explains what happened, what changed, and why the topic matters in history.

Remember, the thesis statement should include:

background topic/theme words immediate impact long-term significance

Here is the draft of a thesis statement:

Historical Background: During the mid-20th century, the American music industry had many workplaces that were divided by racial segregation which limited the collaboration between Black and white musicians and restricting opportunities for Black artists and employees.

Innovation: Impact, Influence, Change: From 1943 to 1971, Cincinnati's King Records transformed the music industry by adopting innovative, racially integrated hiring practices and bringing together musicians from diverse backgrounds to create, record, manufacture, distribute and promote music under one company.

Immediate Impact: King Records provided opportunities for Black artists and employees in all areas of the business while encouraging collaboration between musicians from different racial and musical traditions, leading to new sounds and the early development of rock and roll.

Long-Term Significance: King Records influenced the future of American music by shaping rock and roll while demonstrating that integrated workplaces and diverse creative collaboration could drive both cultural change and greater social and economic equity.

Here is the full thesis statement:

At a time when racial segregation limited opportunities in the music industry, King Records revolutionized music by pioneering integrated hiring practices and fostering collaboration between musicians of different racial and musical backgrounds. The company's innovative approach immediately expanded opportunities for Black artists and employees while creating new musical styles, and its lasting influence transformed American popular music and demonstrated how diversity and inclusion could inspire cultural and social change.



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Thesis Statement Builder

Use your research to build a thesis statement that explains **what happened, what changed, and why your topic matters in history.** Use the graphic organizer below to plan out your thesis statement.



Your thesis statement should include:

background

topic/theme words

immediate impact

long-term significance

Thesis Statement Draft:

Historical Background

Innovation: Impact, Influence, Change:

Immediate Impact:

Long-Term Significance

Full Thesis Statement:



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Creating Your Entry

The last thing you will do for your History Day project is to decide on how to display your research. You can choose from these five categories:

- Paper
- Exhibit
- Documentary
- Performance
- Website

Working On Your Own or in a Group

Exhibits, documentaries, performances, and websites can be done by a single person or by a group. Only one person can write a paper. Below we've outlined some things to consider when deciding to work individually or with a group.

Working on Your Own

There are some advantages to taking your History Day journey on your own. Working alone is less complicated and presents fewer potential distractions than you might encounter in a group. There is no confusion over who is responsible for meeting deadlines. With no one else to depend on, the success or failure of your History Day project is your own.

Working in a Group

Becoming part of a group has some distinct advantages. You and your fellow group members can share the work. Each member will bring a different set of skills and interests to the group. From deciding who will do what and agreeing on the interpretation of your research, to big-picture design decisions, your History Day journey will be one of compromise.

Ask your teachers for rules about how many members you can have in a group. Be careful when choosing who you will team up with. Remember, working with your best friend is not always the best idea. When selecting group members, ask yourself the following questions:

- What type of people do I like to work with?
- What skills will each group member bring to the project?
- What qualities make someone a good group member?
- What traits in people do I want to avoid when picking my partners?
- If you need to work outside of class, will you be able to get together?



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Choosing a Category

When picking a category, make sure to think about these:

- Which category best fits your interests and skills?
- Will you have everything you need to make your project?
- Does your research fit one category better than another? For example, do you have enough pictures for an exhibit? Can your argument be told through a performance or would a different category fit better?

Once you have picked a category, try to look at examples created by other students. Go to <https://www.nhd.org/categories> to see examples from students all over the country. This may help you get ideas about the best way to present your topic. Your own thoughts and ideas will make your project stand out.

Written Materials Required for Each Category

History Day projects, regardless of the category you choose, require the same three documents: a title page, process paper, and annotated bibliography. Below we've detailed these a little further and pointed to specific rules in the [Contest Rule Book](#).

- Title Page: This will be the first page of any written pages you turn in. It must include only the title of the project, your name(s), category, division, and required word counts.
- Process Paper: The process paper must be 500 words or less that answers the following questions:
 - How did you choose your topic and how does it relate to the annual theme?
 - How did you conduct your research?
 - How did you create your project?
 - What is your historical argument?
 - In what ways is your topic significant in history?
- Annotated Bibliography: You must have a citation for every source you **used or consulted** when creating your project. For each citation you must include an annotation **no more than two or three sentences**. Annotations describe how you used the source and how it helped you learn about the topic. For more guidelines and sample bibliographies, visit: <https://nhd.org/en/resources/annotated-bibliography/>.

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Category: Exhibit

Exhibits combine text and visual items like photos. Many exhibits are displayed on three-sided boards, but you can create 3D exhibits as well.

Rules to Remember:

- **Size:** Exhibits can be no larger than 40 inches wide, 30 inches deep, and 6 feet high. Measuring the exhibit does not include the table it rests on; however, it does include any stand you create and any table drapes.
- **Word Limit:** Only 500 student-composed words on the exhibit. Direct quotes or brief credits on photographs do not count against this limit.
 - This limit includes the text you write for titles, subtitles, captions, graphs, timelines, media devices (e.g., video or computer files), or supplemental materials (e.g., photo albums, scrapbooks, etc.) where you use your own words.
- **Credit:** All visual sources (photos, paintings, charts, graphs, etc.) need to be given a brief credit on the exhibit itself and a full citation in your annotated bibliography.



Planning Your Exhibit

A successful exhibit entry must be able to explain itself. The judges shouldn't need to depend on your interview to understand your argument. It is important that you design your exhibit in a way that your photographs, written materials, and illustrations are easy to understand and to follow.

- **Avoiding Clutter.** It is always tempting to try to get as much onto your exhibit as possible, but this usually makes for a cluttered and confusing display. Try to select only the most important items for your exhibit.
- **Plot it out in Advance.** It's important to plan out your exhibit in advance. Each section should be labeled. These labels for your title and main ideas are very important because they direct the viewer's eye around your exhibit. Figure out what you want in each section, including drafts or your text and ideas for quotes, photos, and other illustrations. Be sure to lay everything out BEFORE you glue it down.



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Category: Documentary

In this category you will create a short film on your topic, like the ones on PBS or the History Channel. Make sure you have the equipment and programs needed to make a film. Whichever technology you choose, keep the following in mind:

- Make a storyboard of the types of images you want to use to explain your topic.
- Collect a large number of images to avoid too much repetition. You'll need about 100 images for a ten-minute documentary.
- Use appropriate music as an important addition to your recorded script.
- Write your script or narrative first and then add images.
- Make sure that the script fits with the image on the screen.
- Preview early and re-edit at least once.

Rules to Remember:

- Time Limit: 10 minutes
- Credits: You must include a list of brief credits for each of your sources at the end of the documentary. This is included within the 10-minute time limit.
- Production: Students must operate all equipment used in creating the documentary. Only you, or people you interview, can appear in the documentary. Only you are allowed to provide any narration as well.

Video Presentation

The availability of home video cameras and easy-to-use digital video editing computer software, such as iMovie or Windows MovieMaker, has made this type of documentary the most popular. Here are some suggestions for video presentations:

- Students must operate the camera and the editing equipment.
- Stay organized. Draw up a storyboard of the scenes you will be shooting.
- Present a variety of panning shots, interviews, original footage, and still photographs.
- Appropriate music is an effective addition to your soundtrack but remember that the music must match your presentation. Do not let it overshadow the verbal presentation.
- Watch professional documentaries for ideas.

Storyboards

Storyboards are a great tool to help you to combine the audio and visual elements of your project. Doing some advance planning will save you time when you go to create your final product.

You can make a storyboard form by creating a three-column table. Label the columns, Notes, Visual, and Audio. Use the Visual and Audio columns to match your



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narrative with the images you intend to use to illustrate your points. Use the Notes column to add any information about the section that will help you during the production stage.

Category: Paper

In a research paper you make and support your historical argument through writing. A paper allows you to present your argument, research, and ideas in much detail. Your research can be presented either as a traditional research paper or as a creative writing piece.

Rules to Remember:

- Word Limit: 1,500 to 2,500 words. This does not count words in the title page, process paper, annotated bibliography, or primary source material in appendices. It also does not count citations.
 - **Captions, quotes, and words in endnotes, footnotes, and internal documents other than the citation are included in the word count.**
- Citations: Citations must be given for both direct quotes and specific ideas from other sources. Endnotes, footnotes, or internal documentation must be used within your paper for citations.
- Paper: Papers must be printed double sided on plain white 8.5x11 inch paper. Text must be 12pt font, double spaced, with 1-inch margins on each side.
- Other Required Materials: All papers must have a title page, **process paper**, and bibliography.

Using Footnotes

Footnotes are explanations provided by writers about ideas or quotations presented in the paper that are not their own. Footnotes not only give credit to the originators of ideas, but also serve as evidence in support of your ideas. Usually footnotes occur in three situations:

- Quoting a Primary Source: An example of this would be including a selection from a speech or interview.
- Quoting a Secondary Source: If you take a direct quotation from someone's book, you must footnote it.
- Paraphrasing a Secondary Source: Even if you change an author's ideas into your own words, you must footnote where you found this information.



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Category: Performance

This category allows you to create a historical argument through a short play or other performing art. You write the script, make the costumes, and act out historic characters. The challenge is making your performance engaging without sacrificing historical quality.

Rules to Remember:

- Time Limit: 10 minutes
- Originality: Your performance must be an original production
- Props: You must set up any props yourself. You have 5 minutes to set up before your performance and 5 minutes at the end to remove props and participate in the judge interview.



Write the Script

The average script for a ten-minute performance is four to five double-spaced pages. Make sure your thesis is clear in your performance, ideally incorporated into the beginning and ending of your performance. Make sure your script contains references to the historical evidence, particularly the primary source material you found in your research. Using actual dialogue, quotations, or taking excerpts from speeches are good ways to put historical detail into your performance.

Practice!

Once you have a solid script you can begin practicing. This will include blocking, memorizing, costumes and set design. Often the simpler props and costumes are better. Good costumes help make you convincing but be sure they are appropriate to your topic. Consult photographs or costume guides if you are unsure about appropriate dress. See examples of historical plays to get ideas about stage movements, use of props, etc.

Remember What's Important

Content is the most important factor in your performance and any props you use should be directly related to your theme. Props should help you to emphasize the key concepts of your performance. Remember, you only have five minutes to put up and take down your props.

Category: Website

In this category you create an interactive website. Good websites are well organized, easy to read, and simple to navigate. They make good use of color, font, and visual sources without taking away from your research.

Rules to Remember:



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- Website Editor: All website entries must be created in NHDWebCentral: nhd.org/nhdwebcentral. See Rule E2, p. 33.
- Word Limit: No more than 1,200 student-composed words on the site. This does not count words required on your homepage. It also does not count words used in citations, direct quotes, recurring menus, titles, or navigation instructions.
- Multimedia: Your use of multimedia clips may not exceed 3 minutes. It's up to you if you want to do many short clips, or a few longer ones. You may not narrate audio/video clips.
- Credits: All visual and multimedia material must include a brief credit on your website and be included in your bibliography. These do not count towards your word limit.
- Required Written Materials: Your process paper and bibliography must be on your website as PDFs. They do not count towards your total website word limit.

Research and Plan out Your Website First

It may be tempting to begin using the NHD Website Editor right away, but actually building your website is one of the final steps in your process. You will want to do your research and develop a thesis first. Once you have an idea of what you want to say, plan your website out on paper. Decide on the pages you need, how they will be organized, and what sort of supplemental media content you might want to use.

Consider Including...

The most successful websites are more than just a paper on a computer screen. This category gives you the opportunity to share your ideas in a variety of engaging formats, including multimedia clips, images, and primary sources within your website. As you decide which elements to include, remember to only include those that relate most directly to your argument.

Contact Us!

We're so happy that you're participating in History Day this year! We can't wait to see your final project! Remember that if you need help, you can always ask your teacher. Ohio History Day staff are also available to answer questions.

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