

Theme and Thesis Statements

Innovation in History: Impact, Influence, Change

TEACHER GUIDE

AUDIENCE

Grades 4-12

TIME

80 minutes (or two 40-minute blocks)

STANDARDS

Social Studies: Grade 4:

C.S. 1, C.S. 2, C.S. 15,

C.S. 16, C.S. 17, C.S. 18

Grade 5: C.S. 1, C.S. 11

Grade 6: C.S. 9, C.S. 12

Grade 7: C.S. 1, C.S. 16

Grade 8: C.S. 1, C.S. 20,

C.S. 22, C.S. 23

American History: C.S. 1,

C.S. 2, C.S. 3, C.S. 4, C.S.

6

American Government:

C.S. 3, C.S. 6, C.S. 8, C.S.

10, C.S. 11, C.S. 14, C.S.

15

Modern World History:

C.S. 1, C.S. 2, C.S. 3

Contemporary World

Issues: C.S. 8, C.S. 9, C.S.

10

English Language Arts:

Grades 3-5: R.L. 4.1, R.L.

5.1, R.I. 4.1, R.I. 5.1, R.I.

4.2, R.I. 5.2, R.I. 4.3, R.I.

5.3, W. 4.2, W.5.2

Grades 6-8: R.L. 6.1, R.L.

7.1, R.L. 8.1, R.I. 6.1, R.I.

7.1, R.I. 8.1, R.I. 6.2, R.I.

7.2, R.I. 8.2, R.I. 6.3, R.I.

7.3, R.I. 8.3, W.6.2, W.7.2,

W.8.2

Grades 9-10: R.L. 9-10.1,

R.I. 9-10.1, R.I. 9-10.2,

R.I. 9-10.3, W.9-10.2

Grades 11-12: R.L. 11-

12.1, R.I. 11-12.1, R.I. 11-

12.2, R.I. 11-12.3, W.11-

12.2

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Introduction

In this lesson plan, students will unpack the 2027 National History Day theme of Innovation in History. Students will walk away from this lesson with an understanding of the definition of innovation, how change plays a key role, and brainstormed topic ideas. The lesson will help students to think through how a topic that interests them can demonstrate this theme and will begin to build out the backbone of their History Day project: their thesis statement.

Learning Objectives

- Students will understand the definition of innovation and be able to name examples of innovations in history.
- Students will understand how impact, influence, and change are key parts of innovation and be able to identify them in examples of innovation.
- Students will brainstorm ideas for research topics that connect to the theme.
- Students will be able to identify the parts that make up a strong thesis statement.

Materials

- Teacher Guide
- [NHD Innovation Theme Video](#)
- [NHD Innovation Theme Brainstorm Sheet for High School](#) or [for Middle School](#)
- [Innovation in History Theme Graphic Organizer & Teacher Guide](#)

Vocabulary

Change	To make different in some particular way or aspect; to give a different position, course, or direction
Impact	The strong influence of one thing on another; a significant or major effect
Influence	To have an effect on the condition or development of something like people, technology, culture, government, and/or society
Innovate	To introduce a new process or way of doing things
Innovation	A new idea, method, or device.
Theme	The main subject being discussed or described
Thesis Statement	The central or main idea of a research project that identifies a claim about a topic

Program Outline

Pre-Activity 1: NHD Theme Overview

- I. Announce to your class that you will be beginning a project that combines social studies, research, reading, and writing to create an end product of their choice to showcase their learning. You can mention the options for their end product here (Paper, Exhibit, Documentary, Website, or Performance). The National History Day project has many levels of competition, and all students compete using the same theme and rubrics. The theme for this year's project is Innovation in History: Impact, Influence, Change. Tell students they will be learning more about this theme by viewing the Theme Video. Have students listen to be able to answer these two questions:
 - How does impact, influence and change help us understand innovation?
 - What are examples of each?
- II. Play the video for students via [YouTube](#) or [Vimeo](#) (8:10). Pause the video at 1:11. Have students share out what they learned an innovation is. Students should also share what the difference is between an invention and an innovation.
- III. Resume the video until 3:03. Have students discuss the definition of "impact" they learned and share examples of impacts that has come from an innovation.
- IV. Resume the video until 4:39. Have students discuss the definition of "influence" and share examples of influence that has come from an innovation.
- V. Resume the video until 3:03. Have students review the definition of "change" they learned and share examples of change that has come from an innovation.
- VI. Continue playing the video and listen to the examples NHD has provided from history.

Discussion: What is the difference between an invention and innovation? How do impact, influence, and change connect with innovation?

- Inventions are starting points; innovations happen as people keep changing, adapting, and improving ideas.
 - Looking for the ways that an event, person, invention, etc. has impacted, influenced, and changed society helps us identify innovations in history.
- B. Hold a discussion about some of the open-ended questions posed in the video. These are meant to get students thinking and will not have "right" answers.
- How do small innovations help historians understand broader patterns of historical change? Can you think of any examples?
 - Why and how did communities, institutions, or nations restructure aspect of daily life to accommodate change?
 - What changes in training and education have emerged as a result of innovations in different industries and job markets?

Pre-Activity 2: Examples of Revolution, Reaction, and Reform in History

- I. Pass out the NHD Innovation Theme Brainstorm sheet. Use this worksheet to facilitate a conversation about innovation and how impact, influence, and change help us understand innovations in history. We suggest reviewing the definitions and coming up with one example of an innovation that connects with each term (impact, influence, or change) as a whole group.
- II. You have the option to then let students work independently or with a partner to come up with a second example for each.



Teacher Guide

- a. It is important to note that the charge for students from NHD is not that students must include innovation and all the subtitle theme words (impact, influence, change) in their projects, but if the topic they select involves impact, influence, or change, then students should be sure to include all relevant theme words.

(If choosing to break this lesson into two days, STOP here.)

Main Activity: Brainstorming Topics and Thesis Statements

- I. Pass out the Innovation Theme Graphic Organizer. Use the Teacher Guide to walk students through filling out the top section of the organizer.
 - a. Theme Innovation in History: Impact, Influence, Change
 - b. General Topic/Interest
 - c. Narrow Topic
- II. Give students time to brainstorm as many Narrow Topic ideas as possible. Encourage students to think about P.I.E.s (People, Places, Ideas, and Events) connected to their General Topic/Interest.
- III. In the boxes on the back of the organizer, the goal is for students to select ONE narrow topic idea and think through how the topic is connected to innovation.
- IV. Review the importance of a thesis statement. The thesis statement will be the road map for their entire project. As NHD themes are very broad, it is important for students to select a narrow topic that clearly addresses the theme.
- V. Use the thesis statement on the Teacher Guide as an example to show students how to include background information, immediate impact, and long-term significance. The students have space to work on brainstorming these parts for their own topic idea as well.
- VI. Encourage students to take their time with this process. They might even try out multiple narrow topic ideas before landing on one that they like best.

