

Student Handbook

2024-25 School Year



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How to Use the Connecticut History Day Student Handbook

The Student Handbook includes a variety of tools to introduce and facilitate your participation in the National History Day® program.

This handbook provides a comprehensive *History Day Project Timeline and Resources* document. Whether you are participating in History Day as part of a full-year class, partial term, an after-school club, or on your own you will be able to follow this Timeline to keep on track.

The Student Handbook has tips written by former CHD participants, access to the Connecticut Topics List, research resources for you, ten complete lessons bringing you from an introduction to History Day all the way through the project process and preparing for contest day, and checklists for each section to ensure you don't miss anything along the way.

The Student Handbook mirrors the Educator Handbook, making it much easier to follow along with your teacher.

We are proud to share many wonderful materials created by National History Day® and other History Day affiliates across the country.

About Connecticut History Day

Connecticut History Day is sponsored by The Connecticut Democracy Center. Connecticut History Day, an affiliate program of National History Day®, promotes the study of history in schools – including public, private, and home schools – to create a higher degree of appreciation for the value of historical thought in students, educators, and community members who participate. The spirit of History Day is not based upon winning and losing, it is based on the encouragement of achievement, the recognition of excellence, and the positive critical evaluation of every student participant.

Connecticut middle and high school students choose a topic based on a yearly theme, complete historical research, and create projects of their own choosing for one of five Regional Contests across Connecticut. Students placing in the top four at the Regional Contests participate in the State Contest, held at Central Connecticut State University. Judges and program officials serve to encourage academic achievement and the building of positive self-esteem.

Student projects are evaluated by judging teams at Regional, State, and National levels. They present their projects, are asked questions by the judges, and receive evaluation sheets with constructive feedback. History Day entries, like history, are evolutionary in nature and it is the goal of the program to empower students with research skills, critical thinking skills, and outlets for creative expression, which will enhance their academic abilities in all areas of study.

Students in grades 6-8 participate in the Junior Division; students in grades 9-12 participate in the Senior Division. Students may choose to work alone or in a group of 2-5 students. Papers are the only one of the five categories in which students must work alone. Within each Division are 9 separate judging categories (Paper, Individual Documentary, Group Documentary, Individual Exhibit, Group Exhibit, Individual Performance, Group Performance, Individual Website, and Group Website). While websites and papers are due two weeks in advance of the Contest, students must attend the contest like the other three categories.



**About National History Day® (NHD):**

NHD® is a non-profit organization based in College Park, Maryland, that seeks to improve the teaching and learning of history. The National History Day Contest was established in 1974 and currently engages more than half a million students every year in conducting original research on historical topics of interest. Students present their research as a documentary, exhibit, paper, performance, or website. Projects compete first at the local and affiliate levels, where the top entries are invited to the National Contest at the University of Maryland at College Park. NHD is sponsored in part by HISTORY®, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Park Service, Southwest Airlines, the Crown Family Foundation, the Better Angels Society, and the Diana Davis Spencer

Foundation. For more information, visit nhd.org.

About the Connecticut Democracy Center:

Connecticut History Day is an education program run by The Connecticut Democracy Center (CTDC), formerly the Connecticut Public Affairs Network (CPAN). CTDC is dedicated to strengthening civic engagement among people of all ages, backgrounds and political persuasions by providing comprehensive and educational programming and outreach centered on civics, citizenship and civil discourse. In addition to Connecticut History Day, CTDC manages the Kid Governor® program for fifth grade students as well as educational and public programming at Connecticut's Old State House and manages the Connecticut Network in Hartford. For more information on CTDC and its programs, please visit ctdemocracycenter.org.

Why History Day?

Comments from Former Participants

Nicolas Angeli

History Day allows you to follow your passion for history. No matter what era you enjoy studying, there is always a way to tie it into the program's annual theme. You also learn how to effectively research and argue within your writing. These are vital skills to academic success, and History Day granted me an advanced understanding of this prior to high school. I have also had once in a lifetime opportunities granted to me because of History Day. Thanks to my involvement in this important program, I was selected as one of sixteen student-teacher teams to partake in the *Sacrifice for Freedom: World War II in the Pacific Student-Teacher Institute*. As a result, I was able to visit Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, to further my studies of the Pacific Theater of war. History Day not only teaches you the needed skills to succeed, but it has the potential to open numerous doors of opportunity in your life.

Clarissa Halpryn

History Day has taught me research and writing skills and given me an extensive knowledge base, as well as a love and appreciation of history. These are skills that build conscientious citizens who can make complex analyses of modern events, understanding the context in which these things occur. I will value everything that I've learned from History Day, but it's not what brought me back year after year. I loved participating in History Day because it gave me an opportunity to learn about something that I found interesting, create a project of my design, and make connections with others who also love history. There's a big sense of community at every contest, and I have loved all of the time I spent creating projects and presenting them. History Day teaches invaluable life skills, but it also facilitates creativity and brings together people from not only across Connecticut, but the world.

Andrew Maglio

From my personal experience, I can affirm that History Day teaches students more than they can learn in any school classroom. History Day provides students with the opportunity to become archivists, curators, filmmakers and real budding historians. The exposure CHD/NHD provides to students including primary source research, historical analysis, organization of thought, etc. surpasses the lessons of even the most advanced high school classes.

Shay Pezzulo

As a multi-year History Day participant, I can proudly say that I looked forward to being a part of History Day every year. For each project I created, I grew to appreciate the experience even more. Connecticut History Day encapsulates one of the major highlights of History Day with its motto of *Student Choice, Student Voice*. Throughout their projects, students are granted the liberty to make decisions independently and to truly make the experience their own.

There is a particularly unique excitement that comes with competing in a contest that evokes a sense of motivation, independence, and responsibility that a classroom simply cannot. I am endlessly grateful for the various opportunities presented to me, as well as for the knowledge I have acquired both by conducting my own research and to being exposed to the inspiring work of several talented students.

History Day Contests

There are four levels of competition: School, Regional, State, and National.

2025 Contest Season Information

Currently we are making plans for the contests, with the Regional Contests being held in March 2025 and the State Contest in May 2025. **The 2025 season will be held in-person, and all participants will be expected to attend on contest day.**

Registration for the regional contests will open in November 2024. Please monitor our [CHD Contest Registration Page](#) for instructions and updates. Teachers must register before their students can do so.



Regional Contests

Connecticut is divided into five History Day Regions:

- Fairfield
- Mansfield
- New Haven
- Norwich
- Torrington

Specific towns are assigned to each Regional Contest – information about town assignments can be found on the CHD website at <https://www.historydayct.org/regional-contests.html>. Exemptions may be granted to students with valid schedule conflicts who are unable to participate in their assigned Regional Contests. Permission to switch Regional Contests must be secured from the State Coordinator at rebecca.taber@ctdemocracycenter.org.

The Regional Contests take place in the spring. Students who place in the top four at a Regional Contest are invited to participate in the State Contest. Students are encouraged to improve their projects using comments from the judges prior to the State Contest. Approximately 1,500 students participate annually in the Regional Contests.

The reason why Regional Contests are spread out over a number of weeks is due to schedule restrictions of the host location and to allow the CHD staff to attend all of the contests. Sometimes students feel that going early is an advantage/ disadvantage as do students with a later contest date. Remind students that everyone at the Regional Contest will be in the same boat. There are positives and negatives to each situation.

Important Information on Entry Limit Policy

Due to the continued growth of student participation in CHD, there is a limit on the number of projects a school can send to a Regional Contest: 4 projects per school for each category. (Spread across the 9 categories, that would be a total of 36 projects per school).

CHD holds this policy for a few reasons:

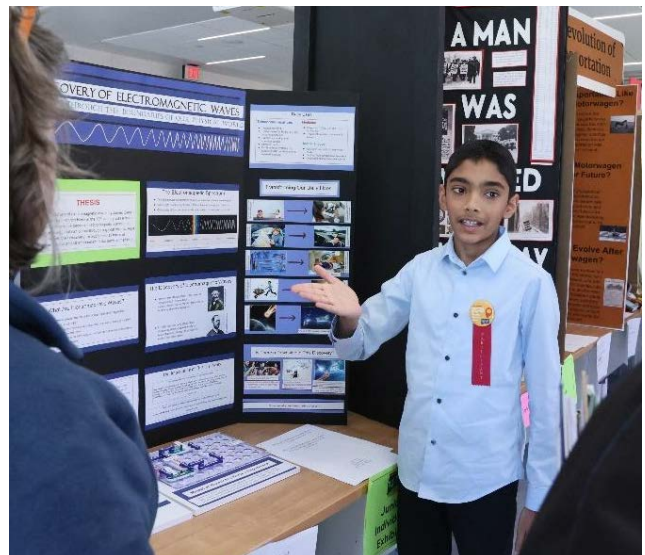
- To provide for fair and equitable contests that are not numerically dominated by one or two schools.
- To combat the large number of students who are "no-shows" on contest day after we have planned for their participation.
- There is a limit to the size of contests that our hosts can accommodate. Post-COVID-19, the costs associated with holding a contest have significantly increased.
- CHD is committed to holding educational and enjoyable contests which is only possible with a strong pool of volunteer judges. Post-COVID-19, judge recruitment is a challenge.
- The policy of limiting the number of entries per school is one that is widely used by National History Day® affiliates, and is recommended best practices from National History Day®.

If possible, CHD staff will open additional slots to schools who have reached their 4 entry per category limit. A decision about additional slots will be made once registration for the Regional Contest is complete.

Please check with your teacher for guidance on how your school will be determining how students will be selected for the Regional contest.

State Contest

The Connecticut History Day State Contest is held in early May at Central Connecticut State University in New Britain. The top two winners in each category and division are eligible to enter the National History Day Contest with 3rd place winners serving as alternates. In addition, several special prizes are awarded each year for entries in a variety of historical subject areas.



National Contest

National History Day® is held at the University of Maryland, just outside of Washington, D.C., where more than 2,500 students from around the world gather for five days to present their work. In addition to History Day, students have many opportunities to visit historic sites in and around Washington, D.C. The National Contest is usually held the third week of June. Monetary prizes, scholarships, and special prizes are presented to National award-winners. The Connecticut History Day staff plans activities for Connecticut students during National History Day®, including guided tours of Washington, D.C. sites.

Connecticut History Day Regions



Students should participate in the Regional Contest to which the town their school is located as assigned.

Contact the State Coordinator, Rebecca Taber, at
Rebecca.taber@ctdemocracycenter.org with questions.

Choosing a Connecticut Topic

We encourage you to consider a Connecticut topic related to the 2025 National History Day® theme. Connecticut's museums, heritage societies, libraries, and other cultural attractions are eager to welcome you. For a suggested list of local organizations please see pages 51-56. Many of these organizations have on-site and digital archives, so if you can't visit in person, you may still be able to access their resources.

Why choose a local topic?

- It's easier to find sources
- Students can visit places associated with their topic
- Studying local history excites students about the place where they live
- Students can view national historic events through a local lens

Don't forget to talk with the librarians at your school or local public library. They are wonderful resources for conducting research and can direct you to resources and databases and may be able to request materials on your behalf.

Each year, the CTDC staff creates a list of Connecticut topics that relate to the NHD Annual Theme. The 2025 Topic List is now available. There are many Connecticut resources available, and you can find information on the *Annual Theme* page on the [CHD website](https://www.historydayct.org).



History Day Planning Timelines and Resources

8-Week Model	12-Week Model	15-Week Model	Task Overview	Resources
1 week	1 week	1 week	Introduce NHD Project and Theme <i>Lesson One: Introducing National History Day</i> Define Classroom Expectations and Deadlines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss project deadlines and grade expectations. Discuss group options and merits of group v. individual projects. Set topic, category or group size limitations for your class. Review NHD Rules and CHD deadlines. 	CHD Website Student Page Intro to History Day Video NHD Rule Book (English) NHD Rule Book (Spanish) NHD Evaluation Forms NHD Category Information
1 week	1 week	2 weeks	Topic Selection <i>Lesson Two: Understanding the Theme: Rights and Responsibilities in History</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read theme overview sheet and watch video <i>Lesson Three: How to Choose a Topic</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brainstorm potential topics and discuss good and bad topics for the theme. Work through several examples as a class. Share the topic selection funnel. You may be ready to select a category. **Students completing a website project will need to create an account within NHD WebCentral in order to begin building a websites. This is separate from contest registration! Students working on websites need to set up accounts within NHD WebCentral and begin tutorials. <i>Lesson Four: Connecting to the Theme</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students select their general topics. Complete the theme graphic organizer. 	2025 Theme materials (Theme Sheet, Theme Book, Graphic Organizer, Overview Video, topic inspiration) CT List of Topics MN History Day Video Links: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Topic Narrowing and Selection Research Questions 101 Thesis Statements National Archives Document Analysis Worksheets Research Links: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NHD Student Resources CHD Student Research NHD Video Links: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What Is a Primary Source? What Is a Secondary Source? Mining Wikipedia Wide Research Historical Context Historical Significance Student Voice How to Use Google Books Smart Site Searching Smart Searching the Library of Congress LOC Resources Annotated Bibliography (Overview) Annotated Bibliography Citations Annotated Bibliography Annotations Registration link for CHD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> https://www.historydayct.org/regional-contests.html NHD WebCentral <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registration and Login link
2 weeks	3 weeks	4 weeks	Research Skills <i>Lesson Five: Researching Your Topic (Depending on your experience, you may need to chunk this into several smaller topics/lessons.)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss academic integrity and how to avoid plagiarism Introduce the concepts of primary v. secondary sources. Share samples related to relevant course content. Discuss various resources and methods (online, library, archives, etc.) Discuss how to identify bias in sources Students develop research questions for their project. Organizational Skills & Annotated Bibliography <i>Lesson Six: Writing and Annotated Bibliography</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share potential research organization methods. Discuss citation formats, bibliographies, and footnotes. Have students identify an organizational system for their NHD project. Introduce annotated bibliography (concept and structure) Students complete citations and annotations AS THEY CONDUCT their research Background Reading/Secondary Sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss ideas of historical context. Begin research with secondary sources. Primary Resource Search and Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss document analysis and interpretation of primary sources. Begin research with primary sources **Registration for the Regional Contests opens in November and closes five weeks prior to the specific contest.	

1 week	2 weeks	2 weeks	Narrow Topic <i>Lesson Seven: Writing a Thesis Statement for History Day</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss the process and importance of a narrow topic, especially given the size limits of NHD projects. Students narrow their topics Analysis and Argument <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss the use of primary and secondary sources to build an argument. Students begin to develop thesis and define theme connection. Select a Presentation Category <i>Lesson Eight: Planning a Project</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share characteristics of good projects in each category. Discuss suitability of topic to category and benefits/drawbacks of each category. Students select presentation category. 	MN History Day Video Links: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thesis Video "What's Your Point?" Project Organization Links to Sample Connecticut Projects NHD WebCentral <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registration and Login link NHD Category Information
1 week	2 weeks	2 weeks	Advanced Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students investigate primary sources and scholarly secondary sources. Students explore multiple perspectives of chosen topic to further their understanding of historical context Analysis and Argument <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students more fully outline argument. Draft Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with general ideas of outlining and supporting arguments with evidence. Discuss the use of verbal, written and visual communication to present ideas. 	NHD Videos: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple Perspectives Wide Research Historical Context Historical Significance Student Voice
2 weeks	3 weeks	4 weeks	Fill Research Holes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students continue to research to fill any holes in support of argument or project. Revise Thesis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students revisit thesis to revise based on new research if needed. Project Construction and Completion <i>Lesson Nine: Writing a Process Paper for History Day</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students completing paper or website projects need to complete projects; students in other categories can be working but not yet completing projects. Students write a rough draft of the Process Paper Project Feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students seek feedback from peers and teachers. Students make final revisions based on feedback. Complete Projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students make final additions to project Students revise Process Paper and annotated bibliography <i>Lesson Ten: Preparing for Contest Day</i> Websites and Papers are due two weeks prior to the contest. Make sure to review the submission deadlines and instructions.	NHD Video: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What Is a Process Paper?
			Regional Contest: attend event State Contest: Improve project for State contest using the judges feedback, submit materials by deadline, attend event. National Contest: Improve project for National contest, submit materials by deadline, attend event.	Advancing students and their teachers will receive the registration link following the completion of their regional/state contest.

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			Regional Contest: attend event State Contest: Improve project for State contest using the judges feedback, submit materials by deadline, attend event. National Contest: Improve project for National contest, submit materials by deadline, attend event.	Advancing students and their teachers will receive the registration link following the completion of their regional/state contest.



Lesson One: Introduction to National History Day®

GOAL: Students will understand the National History Day® program and what is involved in participating in National History Day®

As a student, you have an exciting opportunity as you begin your History Day journey. This is so much more than a research project where you write an essay or design a poster to show all the information you learned about an assigned topic.

With History Day, you get the opportunity to use your voice throughout what you study and how you present your findings in the culminating project.

For this initial lesson, you will learn about the National History Day® program, the different project categories, and the rules that provide the framework for the project.

Tasks/Activities:

1. Participate in the class discussion considering what you already know about National History Day.
2. Watch the "What is History Day?" [video](#) from Connecticut History Day.
3. Read the **Basic Category Information** handout and think about which category interests you.
4. Your teacher may ask you to explore the [Connecticut History Day](#) and [National History Day](#) websites to learn more about the process and the options within each category.
5. Complete the **National History Day Rule Book Scavenger Hunt**.
6. Review and complete the **Introduction to National History Day Checklist**.

Basic Category Information

There are five presentation categories: paper, exhibit, performance, documentary, and website. Your presentation category should best represent your skills as a researcher and fit well with the topic.

For more information about the categories, visit the [NHD Contest Rules & Evaluation page](#).

Paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Composed of introduction, body and conclusion. • Between 1,500-2,500 words (including quotations and explanatory end/footnotes). • May use footnotes or endnotes. • May include an appendix. • Annotated Bibliography and Process Paper are required.
Exhibit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visually appealing. • 500 student-composed word limit (not including quotations). • Incorporates a variety of photos, documents, materials/artifacts, and audio-visual elements effectively. • Size limit: 40 in. W x 30 in. D x 6 ft. high. • Not limited to a tri-fold display. Three-dimension and multi-sided exhibits are permitted as long as they fit within the size limits. • Annotated Bibliography and Process Paper are required.
Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ten-minute time limit. • Script should be focused on your thesis and include historical references, quotations, etc. • Should be complete with appropriate costumes, blocking, and set. • Students are permitted an extra five minutes before to set up and five minutes following the performance to pack up and interview with the judges. • Annotated Bibliography and Process Paper are required.
Documentary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ten-minute time limit. • Use film, audio, photos, video-editing software, and recording equipment effectively. • Topic should have an ample availability of still photos and video clips. • Interviews are permissible but should be conducted with people who offer primary source insight and not historians. • Brief source credits are required at the end of the documentary. • Annotated Bibliography and Process Paper are required.
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,200 student-composed word limit (not including quotations). • MUST be completed within the NHD WebCentral platform. • Should incorporate photos, videos, audio clips effectively. • Should utilize your understanding of web design to effectively present your project. • Annotated Bibliography and Process Paper must be integrated as PDFs into website. <p>★ Students wishing to complete a website will need to register with NHD WebCentral, granting access to a unique URL and the web building platform. This should be done early in the project completion.</p>



National History Day® Rule Book Scavenger Hunt



This activity is designed for students to read and explore the National History Day® Rule Book.

Directions: Open a new tab for the [NHD Rule Book](#) and carefully read through the questions and respond to each with the appropriate information.

1. NHD® Contests have two divisions. In which division will you compete this year?
2. a. NHD® categories permit both INDIVIDUAL and GROUP entries except for which category?

b. What is the maximum number of students permitted in a GROUP entry?
3. Research for NHD® projects includes secondary and primary sources. List two examples from the rule book for each.

SECONDARY SOURCE	PRIMARY SOURCE

4. NHD® discourages interviews with this type of person. Why do you think this is added to the rule book?
5. Following the regional contest, one of your group members decides to not continue with the competition. Can your group replace this student?
6. You and your partner have chosen a topic similar to both of your individual projects from last year, but your teacher tells you that you cannot use that information. Why can you **not** use last year's research?
7. You need help with your project. Give two examples of how a teacher or parent/guardian can provide reasonable help.

- a.
 - b.
8. Your group is completing a project on your favorite sports team. Can you wear jerseys when meeting with the judges?
9. a. What are the THREE required written materials for **all** categories?
- b. Can these items be in a binder or folder?
10. When writing the annotations for your bibliography, what are the two questions you should answer?
- a.
 - b.
11. The PAPER category word count is ____ to ____ words. Besides your own words, what else must be included in your total word count?
12. You want to incorporate sound effects in your PERFORMANCE. Who is permitted to run our equipment/device?
13. Your group wants to reenact a historical event in your DOCUMENTARY. Can you use other classmates as extras when you film the reenactment?
14. You have decided to create a multi-sided rotating EXHIBIT.
- a. What are the maximum dimensions for your project?
 - b. What must be included in the measurements?
15. You've chosen to include media in your WEBSITE. You have two media clips totaling 3:19 and a link to a live-stream of an animal rescue. What changes will you need to make before the first contest?

Checklist: Introduction to National History Day

- ☐ I have watched the CT History Day promo video.
- ☐ I have bookmarked and explored the CT History Day website for:
 - Annual Theme information and resources
 - Suggestions for CT topics
 - Research resources
- ☐ I have bookmarked and explored the National History Day website.
- ☐ I am competing in the _____ Regional Contest for CT History Day.
- ☐ I have completed the Rule Book Scavenger Hunt.
- ☐ I have reviewed the category descriptions and identified one or more categories I am considering for my project.
 - Category #1:
 - I like this category because:
 - Category #2:
 - I like this category because:

What questions do I have after completing this section?



Lesson Two:

Understanding the Theme *Rights and Responsibilities in History*

GOAL: Students will understand and define the 2025 National History Day® theme ***Rights & Responsibilities in History***

This year's annual theme is ***Rights & Responsibilities in History***. You will choose your topic and ultimately design your project in relation to this theme.

It is critical to note that the theme can be interpreted in a multitude of ways. Many students look at the theme literally, but some of the best projects each year may examine their topic through another interpretation of the theme.

“What is an example of a right and the responsibility connected to that right? What are some ways people assert a right they hold, and honor the responsibility they have?” They can think of examples from legal codes that enshrine rights and assign responsibilities to individuals. Students may also consider the rights and responsibilities of groups, governments, nation-states, or the rights granted to those not involved in the legal or governmental process. It could be a right held and responsibility fulfilled on a local, national, or international scale. Whatever the student's focus, they will need to think about the historical context that created this right and responsibility, and the impact of the right and responsibility. *“What effect did this right and responsibility have in the short term, and long term?”*

Tasks/Activities:

- Engage in the class discussion to help you understand the definitions and components of this year's theme.
- Watch the 2025 National History Day® Theme [Video](#) and complete the ***Companion Worksheet***.
- Each year, the NHD® Office releases the official [Theme Book](#). In it you will find an overview of the theme (pg. 4-6) and several detailed examples, as well as a collection of research sources from NHD partner organizations and institutions. You may want to revisit this theme book more than once to look for ideas and research resources.
- Browse the [List of CT Topics](#)
- Either in class or for homework, write a response to the questions, *“What is an example of a right and the responsibility connected to that right?”* and *“What effect did this right and responsibility have in the short term, and long term?”* and bring to class the next day.
- Review and complete the ***Understanding the Theme Checklist***.



Rights and Responsibilities in History Theme Video Companion Worksheet

Use this worksheet to gather ideas and questions you have about this year's there.



PART 1: BEFORE VIEWING

Consider what you think the term means. Use the box on the left to describe or draw what comes to mind. Use the box on the right to write a dictionary definition.

Right

Dictionary Definition

Responsibility

Dictionary Definition

PART 2:

Watch the Video 2025 Rights & Responsibilities in History

As you watch the introduction of the theme video, fill in the blanks to help you understand the basic elements of this year's theme.

While individuals have the _____ to freedoms such as free speech, they also have a _____ to exercise these freedoms in a manner that respects the rights & wellbeing of others.

Rights are freedoms or privileges that individuals possess as human beings or as citizens of a _____. They are often, though not always, _____ by laws, charters, or constitutions that establish the boundaries of personal freedoms (_____) and protections and obligations (_____).

In the present day we can examine rights and responsibilities in history to learn how members of society _____ things, how they treated each other, and what they thought was important for people's _____ and _____.

To make meaning of rights and responsibilities in history, we need to ask some important questions.

_____ gets to decide who has rights?
_____ all people have the same rights?
_____ were certain rights created, to whom were they given, and why?
_____ is responsible for holding people accountable for providing and ensuring the established rights?

E_____ relationships between rights and responsibilities

T_____ their complex histories

A_____ more questions

As you proceed through the brief video, pause as needed to write down topic suggestions or questions you have. These may be helpful as you begin searching for your own topic ideas.

What are the 6 theme examples you see in the video?

1.

4.

2.

5.

3.

6.

Here is a space for any notes you would like to take about these theme examples

PART 3: POST VIEWING

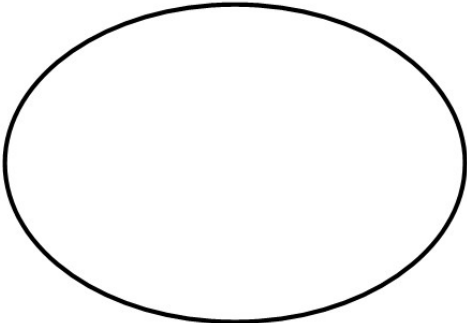

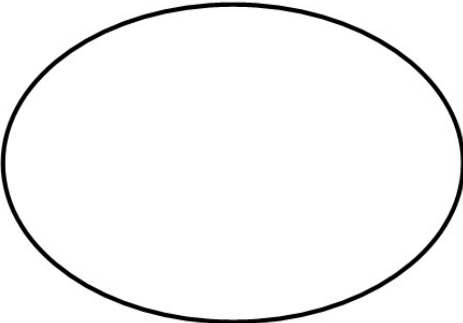
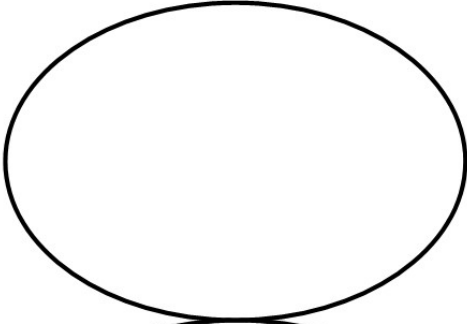

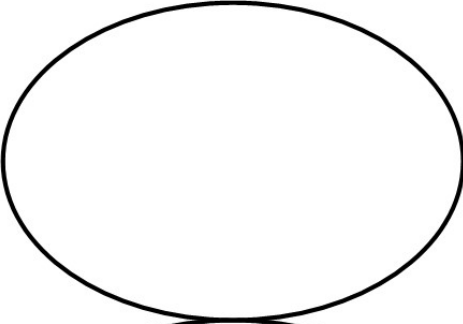
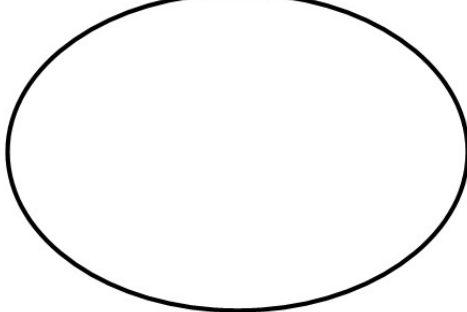

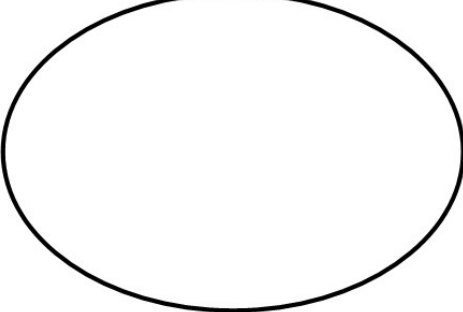
Think about 3 of the 6 theme examples, see if you can fill out the squares below

Theme Example 1:	Right	Responsibility
	Questions	

Theme Example 2:	Right	Responsibility
	Questions	

Theme Example 3:	Right	Responsibility
	Questions	

Brainstorm some Rights, and try to identify a Responsibility that will go with it

RIGHT		RESPONSIBILITY
		
		
		

Here are some questions to consider when you are researching a topic:

Who does this right apply to? What responsibility goes with this right (or what right goes with this responsibility)?

What factors led to establishing or changing this right and responsibility? How and why?

How did this right and responsibility create change? What happened before and after?

What were the immediate and long-term consequences?

Who faced the results of this right or responsibility? Think about positive and negative effects on different groups of people.

How do different groups with different perspectives understand, and try to affect, the right and responsibility?

Why is this right and responsibility significant in history?

Consider your local history (town and state). What might be some organizations you could use to find examples of Rights & Responsibilities in History in your community?

For more information about this year's theme, the topics mentioned in the video, and some research tips, check out the [2025 NHD Theme Resources: Rights & Responsibilities in History](#).

Checklist: Understanding the Theme

- ☐ I have downloaded and/or bookmarked the 2025 Theme Book.
 - I have read the theme overview (pgs. 3-6).
 - I have read at least one complete article in the Theme Book.
- ☐ I have watched the History Day theme video *Rights & Responsibilities in History* and completed the companion worksheet.
- ☐ I have responded to the two writing prompts.
- ☐ I have browsed the List of CT Topics.
- ☐ I have made notes of possible topic ideas.

What questions do I have after completing this section?



Lesson Three: Choosing a Topic

GOAL: Students will pick a category and topic for their Connecticut History Day and National History Day® project

Choosing a topic for your History Day project can be challenging. The only real limitations are any topic parameters your teacher provides and selecting a topic that's HISTORY. This doesn't mean you can only choose a topic if it appears in a history textbook, but rather that it occurred in the past. National History Day® recommends selecting topics that took place 20-25 years ago to allow for the significance and impact to be more evident.

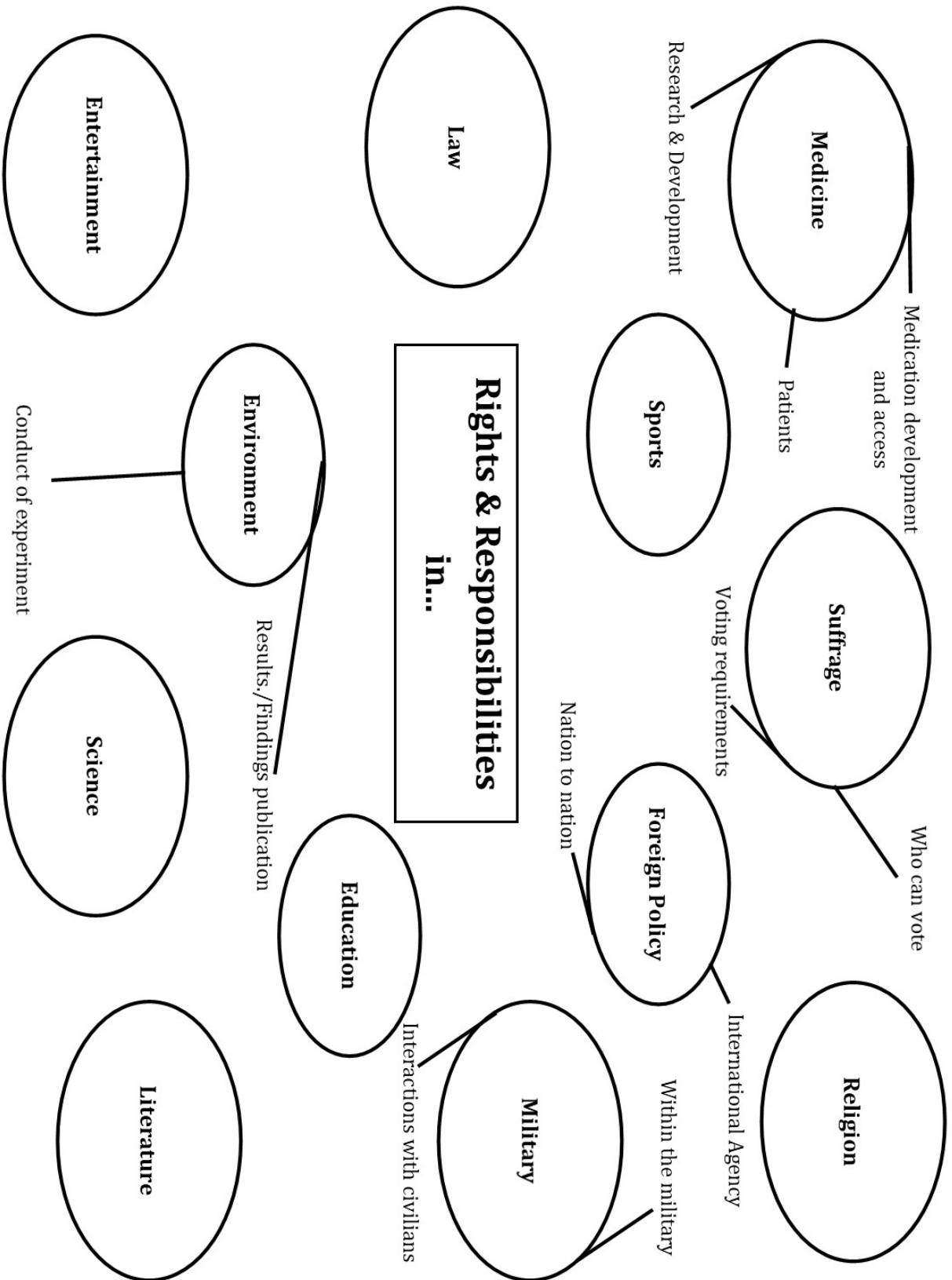
How do you choose a topic?

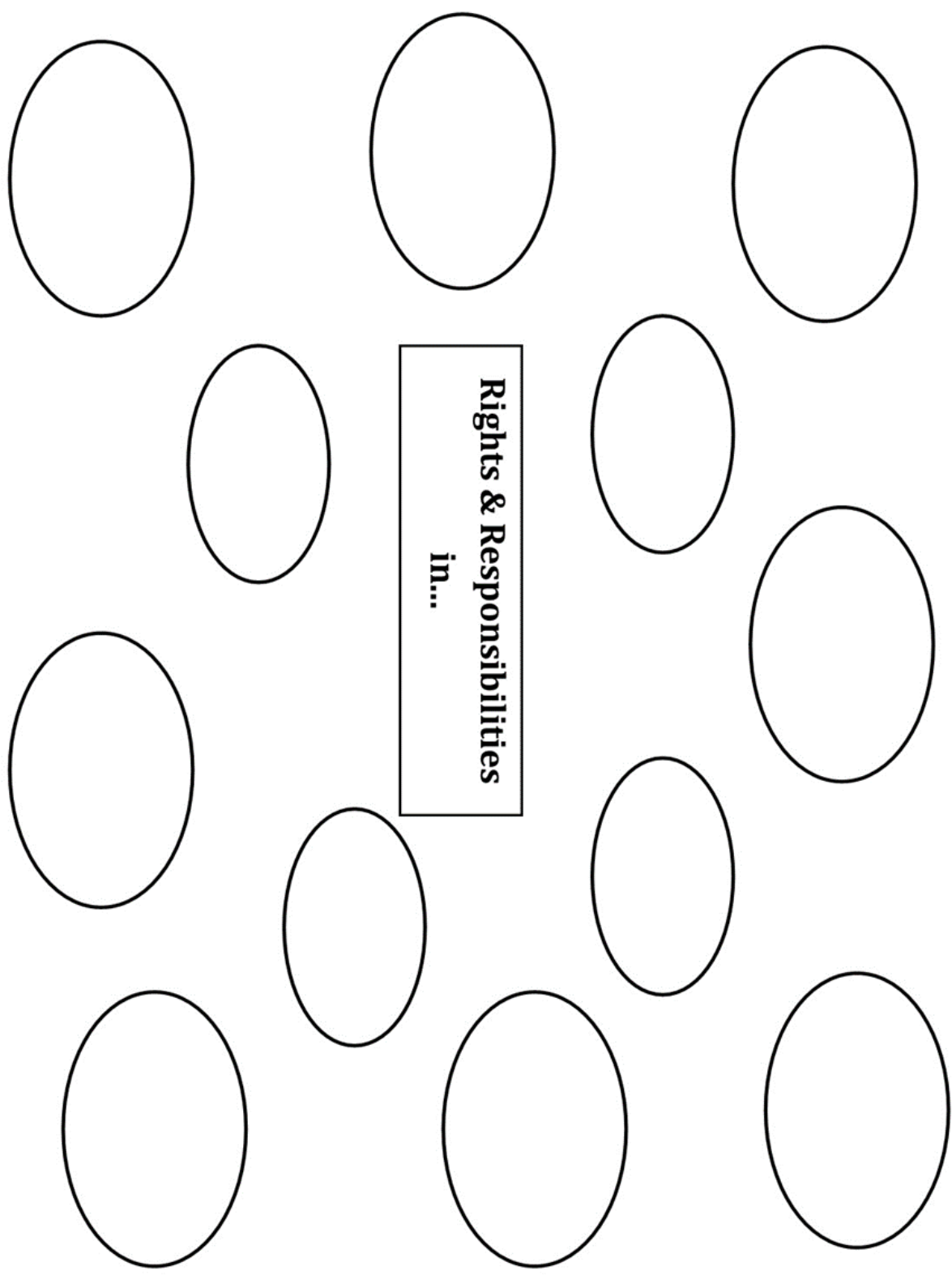
- Start with your own personal interests, family history, or cultural heritage.
- Explore your town's local history.
- Read the [List of CT Topics](#)
 - Notice the types of topics—some may be well-known, or ones you have never heard of. They may range from politics, art, music, Native Americans, the military, women's rights, and so on. Everything has a past! Think about your interests and conduct background research.
- Also check out topic ideas of all kinds from [NHD Theme Topic Inspiration](#).
- Consider a different approach to a well-known topic. For instance, Jackie Robinson (the first African American to play in Major League Baseball) is a very popular topic. Consider exploring who was the first African American to play in the NFL or NBA.

Tasks/Activities:

1. Discuss with your classmates your responses to the writing assignment from the previous class.
2. Begin to research different historic time periods and moments in history that are of interest to you to see if you can find a topic. Facilitate the brainstorming by using a word web, mind map or playing a game such as *Scattergories*. You can also watch [Topic Narrowing and Selection](#) from MN History Day.
3. Continue to research topics that fit the theme of *Rights & Responsibilities in History* until you find a topic of interest. Sample topics relating to Connecticut can be found [online](#). For a broader range of topics, students can explore the [NHD Topic Inspiration](#).

4. Once you've selected a topic, complete the ***History Day Topic Funnel*** worksheet. This activity will help you determine the appropriate scope of your topic. If your topic is too broad, you will struggle to keep focused on the theme, and if your topic is too narrow you may struggle to find enough resources to complete your project. This activity will also give you a chance to think about the types of questions you will need to address for your research. A printable version is in this section.
 5. Complete the ***Choosing a Topic*** Worksheet. You can conduct some early research and explain why you've chosen their topic. Remember to record the sources for any information you find.
 6. NHD allows students to create projects as a team or individually, and you will need to decide how you would like to create your project - if there are other students in class who have an interest in the same topic, you may want to work together.
 - a. If you are creating a group project for Connecticut History Day, fill out the ***Connecticut History Day Group Project Contract Agreement***.
 7. Review and complete the ***Choosing a Topic Checklist***.
- 8.







IDAHO STATE
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

NATIONAL HISTORY DAY IN IDAHO

Scattergories

Instructions: Pick a letter of the alphabet, or a decade in time, and brainstorm topic ideas based on the categories below for two minutes.

1. Fashion_____
2. Business_____
3. Advocate for Disabled _____
4. Sporting Events_____
5. Popular Culture_____
6. Survivor_____
7. Disaster_____
8. War_____
9. Bizarre Events_____
10. Technology_____



IDAHO STATE
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

NATIONAL HISTORY DAY IN IDAHO

Scattergories

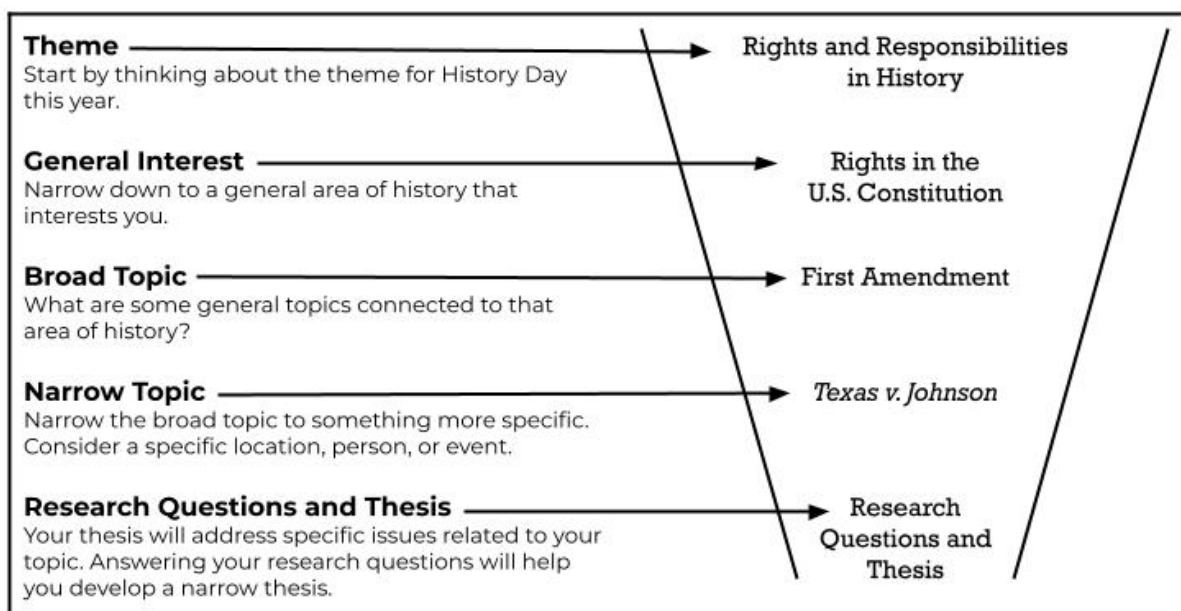
Instructions: Pick a letter of the alphabet, or a decade in time, and brainstorm topic ideas based on the categories below for two minutes.

1. Music_____
2. Inventor_____
3. Law_____
4. Art_____
5. Popular Culture_____
6. Advocate for Change_____
7. Economy_____
8. War_____
9. Culture Clash_____
10. Science_____

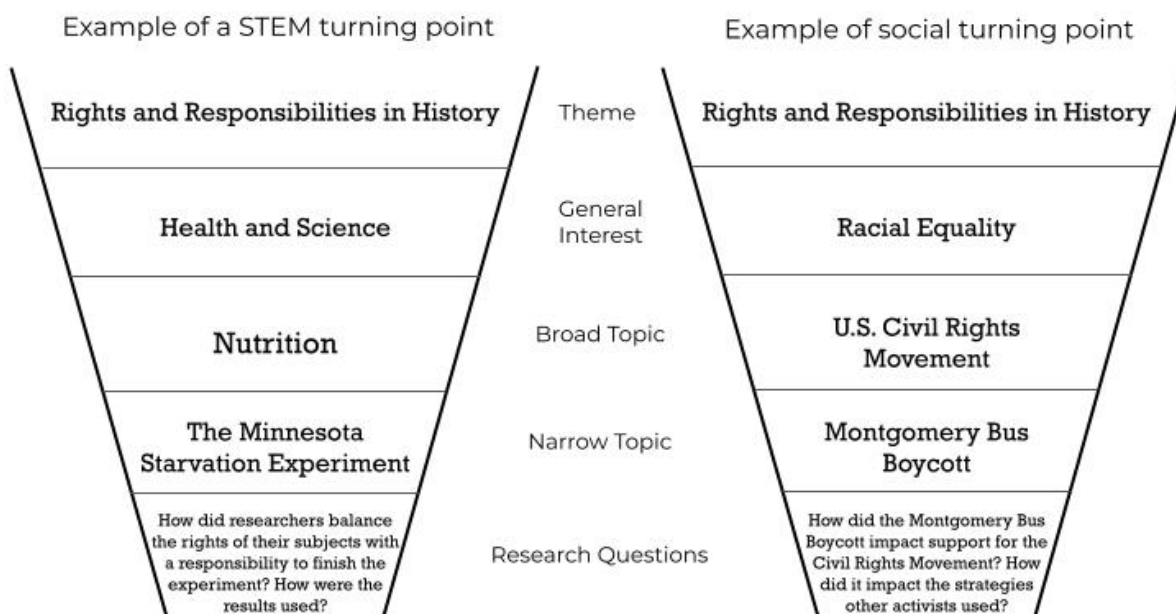
Reprinted courtesy of Idaho State Historical Society

History Day Topic Funnel

Topic ideas generally start out broad - and too big for a History Day project. If your topic is too big, it's going to be challenging to fit all the information that is needed into your project. We use the funnel to narrow our topics to a more manageable size.



Sample Topic Funnels



Name: _____ Class Period: _____

Worksheet: History Day Topic Funnel

Rights & Responsibilities in History

Theme

**General
Interest**

Write your own here:

**Broad
Topic**

Write your own here:

**Narrow
Topic**

Write your own here:

**Research
Questions**

Write your own here:

Connecticut History Day Group Project Contract Agreement

Name: _____

Theme: _____

Group Topic: _____

Project Due Date: _____

Group Team Leader: _____

The Group Team Leader will be the first person to register for the upcoming Connecticut History Day Regional Contest.

Choose your group carefully. The group agrees to share equally in all work and expenses. Money may not be spent unless all group members are consulted. Each member of the group will receive the same grade for this project. Only those students named on this form are considered group members. All members must turn in a copy of this form signed by a parent or legal guardian to participate as a group. The Group Team Leader will be responsible for adding the project entry to the NHD Registration System even though all group members must register for the contest(s).

List of other group members:

I have reviewed the National History Day [rules and regulations](http://www.historydayct.org/rules-and-regulations) and understand all of the requirements of the event.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

I have noted the names of the students in the group and am aware of the project due date. I understand that if this project is completed for a class, all students in this group will receive the same grade for this project. I consent to my child participating in this group.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Choosing a Topic Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Use this worksheet to guide your search for a topic for National History Day's 2025 theme *Rights & Responsibilities in History*

Potential NHD Topic: _____

What factors led to this right & responsibility?

List three facts about this topic:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What impact did this right and the associated responsibility have on the people who had the right?
What about those who didn't?

What opportunities were created or denied by this right and responsibility, and for whom?

Why would you choose this topic for your National History Day project?

Checklist: Choosing a Topic

- ☐ I have reviewed the 2025 NHD Theme Book for possible topic ideas.
- ☐ I have browsed the List of CT Topics.
- ☐ I have completed at least one brainstorming activity to assist with choosing a topic.
- ☐ I have completed the *History Day Topic Funnel* for my topic.
- ☐ I have completed the *Choosing a Topic Worksheet*.
- ☐ I have chosen a topic that is interesting to me and that I will be comfortable working on for the duration of 2025 Contest Season.
- ☐ I have chosen a topic that occurred at least 20-25 years in the past.
- ☐ I have developed a list of at least FOUR specific questions to jumpstart my research, and at least two are **HOW/WHY** questions.
- ☐ I can explain how my topic connects to the *Rights & Responsibilities* theme.
- ☐ I have decided to complete my project (choose one):
 - INDIVIDUALLY- I understand that I will be the only one responsible for the completion of the research and design and completion of the project.
 - AS A GROUP- I understand that I am agreeing to work with up to four other students. We will divide up and agree to the work responsibilities. We have completed the Group Project Agreement.

What questions I have after completing this section?



Lesson Four:

Connecting to the Theme *Rights & Responsibilities in History*

GOAL: Students will understand and connect their chosen topic to the annual National History Day® theme of *Rights & Responsibilities in History*

Understanding the annual theme and its purpose in National History Day is absolutely vital. Please review National History Day's official explanation of the annual theme:

- *"The annual National History Day® contest theme is designed to help you think of a topic from any aspect of local, regional, national, or world history. With this focus, you can begin to ask questions that your research will help you answer, including how your topic is significant in history."*

*To celebrate our 50th anniversary, NHD's theme will be **Rights & Responsibilities in History**. This year's theme invites you to consider questions of time and place, cause and effect, change over time, and impact and significance.*

The key to this theme is addressing BOTH rights AND responsibilities. These are two powerful forces in history, but one does not work without the other."

— National History Day® (nhd.org)

Tasks/Activities:

- Reexamine the National History Day® theme *Rights & Responsibilities in History* by reviewing the Theme Sheet and your previous written responses to the questions, *"What are the impacts of both the right, and the responsibility?"* and *"What are the different perspectives on the right and responsibility you considered for the first question?"*
- Watch the Research Questions 101 video. Begin writing some of your own research questions related to your topic. You can add these to your Topic Funnel.
- Using your chosen topic, complete the **BALANCE** organizer to understand the time period of your topic and how it fits into the context of history.
- Use your **Choosing a Topic** worksheet and **BALANCE** to begin analyzing your topic's frontier and historical impact and understanding your topic's connection to the theme.
- Complete the **Connecticut History Day Project Proposal** to submit your topic for your teacher's approval.
- Review and complete the **Connecting to the Theme Checklist**.

Background

A right

Leaders

Actions/responsibilities

New perspectives

Change

Effects



Topic:



B

A

L

A

N

C

E

So what? Why was this topic important in history?



Connecticut History Day Project Proposal
2025 RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES IN HISTORY

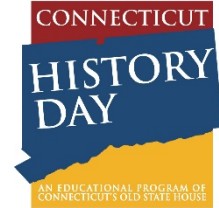
Name: _____

Date: _____

Topic: _____

Category: _____

Individual or Group: _____



How does your topic fit the theme *Rights & Responsibilities in History*?

How did this right and its associated responsibility impact those involved?

What were the short- and long-term impacts?

Why is this topic significant in history?

Checklist: Connecting to the Theme

- ☐ I have reviewed the 2025 NHD® Theme Book and understand the concepts of rights and responsibilities in history.
- ☐ I can explain how my topic is connected to the theme.
- ☐ I have watched the *Research Questions 101* video and used that information to help me write at least three good questions to begin my research.
- ☐ I have a general understanding of the impact my topic had in history.
- ☐ I have completed the *BALANCE* graphic organizer.
- ☐ I have chosen a category that will demonstrate my personal skills and complement my topic.
- ☐ I have completed and submitted the *Project Worksheet*.
- ☐ I am continuing to list research questions as I explore more information about my topic.

What questions I have after completing this section?



Lesson Five: Researching Your Topic

GOALS: Students will conduct research through inquiry and investigation as it relates to their chosen topic and the annual theme, be able to identify potential bias in their sources, and practice academic integrity throughout the research and writing process.

Over the next several weeks you will complete the in-depth task of academic research. You should already have started to research your topic to have a basic understanding of your topic and how it may connect with this year's theme. Now, you will dig deeper and analyze both primary and secondary source materials. You will also have to make decisions about the credibility and potential bias of your sources.

To ensure the accuracy of your research and to provide proper credit to the sources you use, National History Day requires an Annotated Bibliography formatted using either MLA or Chicago style. Your teacher will instruct you as to the format you should use. It is very important in academic writing that every precaution is taken to prevent plagiarism. To assist with this, you will find in this section some tips on notetaking and organization.

In this section, you will find information and resources to help you apply good notetaking and writing practices to avoid plagiarism, identify and interpret PRIMARY and SECONDARY sources, how to conduct research that will represent multiple perspectives from a wide variety of sources, how to evaluate the sources you are consulting, and how to begin the annotated bibliography.

Academic Integrity: Participate in a discussion about academic integrity. Consider these questions: *"What do you think academic integrity means?" "What are ways to record information when conducting research?" "Why is it important to take good notes when researching a topic?"* Share your thoughts. Identify a variety of notetaking formats and the pros/cons of each. Think about how you like to take notes and what helps you keep track of your information. Be prepared to explain the difference between a summary and paraphrasing. (If you are new to research, your teacher may assign additional practice activities.) Review the citation style identified by your teacher: MLA or Chicago.

Artificial Intelligence use in History Day Projects

AI (Artificial Intelligence) is an emerging technology, and can be used as a tool for some aspects of your project though it has limitations in ability and permissible use for National History Day® projects. We remind you that if you participate in Connecticut History Day, you agree to create a project that is the original work of you/your group. There is no

requirement to utilize AI tools for your project. If you decide to use AI tools, there are ways you are allowed to do so, and use cases which are not allowed.

Ways in which you **are allowed** to use AI

- Brainstorming topic ideas.
- Brainstorming key words related to your topic to use for research.
- Checking your work for grammatical mistakes.
- Using the system to simplify language to make a source more understandable.

Ways in which you are **not allowed** to use AI

- Generating any text, graphs, charts, images, tables, or video for your project (this includes your process paper and annotated bibliography).
- Having AI do analysis for you. Remember: Student Voice is about students doing their own original analysis based on their research, an AI tool cannot analyze on your behalf for your project.
- Quotes, statistics, or other evidence you plan to directly use within your project.
 - o AI can be used to find sources with this type of information, but AI is known to provide incorrect or made up information. This makes it an unreliable source for direct evidence.

If you use AI tools, be sure to cite them in your annotated bibliography and explain their use in your process paper. Both *MLA* and *Chicago Manual of Style* have citation formats for AI tools.

If you have any questions about appropriate use of AI tools in your project, reach out to the Connecticut History Day staff at info@historydayct.org.

Primary and Secondary Sources:

Participate in a discussion about primary and secondary sources, and what the difference is. *What is a primary source? What is a secondary source? How can you tell the difference? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?* Share your thoughts with your class. Read the ***Researching Your Topic*** handout, focusing on the first two pages related to sources. If you need more information about these sources, you can watch the NHD videos about [primary sources](#) and [secondary sources](#).

Complete Section One of the **Primary vs. Secondary Sources** activity. Go over the answers together.

Complete Section Two of the **Primary vs. Secondary Sources** activity. As you are looking at the sources, think about why each would be helpful and to consider what new questions the sources raise.

As you get more familiar with analyzing these sources, you can try the [National Archives Document Analysis Worksheets](#) to hone your skills with different types of primary sources.

Identifying and Understanding Bias in Sources

Read page three of the **Researching Your Topic** handout which reviews how to evaluate a source for:

- Credibility
- Accuracy
- Balance
- Support

Watch the [“Identifying Bias” video](#). Afterward, participate in a discussion about how to evaluate the credibility of sources. *How can you be sure the author can be trusted? How can you determine the accuracy of a source’s information? Is a source balanced? Can you identify bias or tone? Does the source provide evidence to support the facts?*

Annotated Bibliography Introduction

Watch the video [Annotated Bibliography \(Overview\)](#) about NHD annotated bibliographies and how to build an annotated bibliography using the NHD website (*Note: the next lesson addresses the details of the annotated bibliography for History Day. In this lesson, you are introduced to the concept so you can create a rough draft to track your research and how it helped further your understanding of your topic.*)

Your teacher should inform you of the writing style you will be expected to follow. NHD permits either MLA or Chicago style; your school may have a preference.

Your school may have an account with NoodleTools or another online citation generator—be sure to ask. If you want to use free online citation generators, you can check out: Easy Bib, Cite Fast, or Citation Machine.

You may want to explore these plagiarism checkers ([PapersOwl](#), [EasyBib](#), [Grammarly](#)).

Research Begins

Begin to research your chosen topic and how it pertains to the theme using the **Connecticut History Day Research Worksheet** or another preferred note-taking method.

Use the **Resource Bank** included in this handbook to find places to visit for their research. This list is meant to be a springboard for students.

Review and complete the **Researching Your Topic Checklist**.

Primary vs. Secondary Sources

Primary Source: provides first-hand evidence about a topic or event. The source comes from the time period of the topic or created later by someone who had first-hand knowledge of the topic.

Secondary Source: created later by someone who did not experience the topic or event first-hand.

Section One

Classify each type of source as either (P) PRIMARY or (S) SECONDARY and explain your reasoning.

1. The story your grandfather tells you about his experience during the Vietnam Conflict.

P S Why?

2. A letter written by Nathan Hale to his mother about his efforts in the Revolutionary War.

P S Why?

3. Your social studies textbook.

P S Why?

4. A photograph of you and your friends at your 10th birthday party.

P S Why?

5. A newspaper from the day after the Titanic sank.

P S Why?

6. A mummy from ancient Egypt.

P S Why?

7. The information shared with you by the Old State House tour guide.

P S Why?

8. The *Diary of Anne Frank*—the published diary of a girl who experiences the Holocaust.

P S Why?

9. Give two more examples of a PRIMARY source.

a. _____

b. _____

10. Give two more examples of a SECONDARY source.

a. _____

b. _____

Section Two

Imagine you are researching child labor in America. For each source below, identify it as **Primary** or **Secondary**, and write at least one fact that you can gather from the source and one question you have about the topic or the source.

SOURCE	TYPE OF SOURCE	ONE FACT I LEARNED	QUESTION I HAVE
A newspaper article from Feb. 27, 1933 about children working in CT tobacco fields			
A 1910 pamphlet giving child labor statistics			
A 2021 article on the CT Explored website explaining the history of child labor in Connecticut			
A 1914 photograph by Lewis Hine of girls working in a tobacco shed.			
A book written in 1994 about Lewis Hine's work to raise awareness of child labor in America. (view a preview of the book)			

Wrap-Up: Write a brief summary of what you learned about child labor from these sources.



RESEARCHING YOUR TOPIC

You've chosen your topic! Your background reading means you should know a little bit about your topic. Now it's time to dig deeper. Keep in mind why you are doing the research:

- To learn more about your topic
- To develop and defend your thesis statement

TIPS FOR RESEARCH SUCCESS

Research takes practice. Here are some tips to make sure you're getting the most out of the time you spend on your project.

- Don't rely on the Internet! It's a great place to start, but it won't have everything. Other sources will typically give you more information and deeper analysis.
- Be critical. Not all sources should be trusted. Use great discretion on the Internet. Make sure your books are written by credible people. When in doubt, ask a teacher or librarian.
- Have balanced research. Use a variety of sources from different points of view. Sometimes sources will have conflicting information or missing parts.
- Use footnotes, citations and bibliographies in books and other secondary sources to find what primary and secondary sources the author used. See if you can find those sources for your own research!

SOURCES

Remember, not all sources are the same. Historians classify sources into two different categories – primary and secondary. It is not only important that you use both, but that you use a variety of each. While you research:

- Determine what types of sources you need.
- Consider conducting an interview.
- Find your sources.
- Analyze your sources.
- Cite your sources.

A **primary source** gives you first-hand evidence about your topic. They usually come from the time period or around the time period in which your topic takes place. Primary sources can also come from an interview with an individual who participated in or witnessed events from your topic or a memoir written later by someone who had involvement with your topic.

A **secondary source** is a piece of information that was created later by someone who did not experience first-hand or participate in the events you are researching. People who write or create these sources often use other secondary and primary sources in their own research.



SECONDARY SOURCES

Secondary sources provide a lot of information, including what types of primary sources are available. Below is a table to help you understand what types of secondary sources there are and what each type can provide you in your research.

	General Facts	Time Period Information	Historical Context	Sources other scholars have used	Opinions from Other Scholars	What scholars have already learned
History Textbooks	X	X	X			
Encyclopedias	X					
Documentaries		X	X		X	
Websites	X	X				
Scholarly Books			X	X	X	X
Scholarly journals				X	X	X
Scholarly Articles					X	
Interviews with Scholars					X	X

DETERMINING THE QUALITY OF YOUR SECONDARY SOURCE

Before you get too deep into a secondary source, you'll want to be certain that it is a good, reliable source. Evaluate these four key points about your sources – are they:

- Credible
- Accurate
- Balanced
- Supported



CREDIBLE

A credible source is one in which the author can be trusted to provide his or her own ideas and be able to back them up with evidence. If your source is a book, pay attention to the publisher as well as the author. Books published by universities tend to be safe.

Your source may lack credibility if:

- The author is anonymous.
- The source seems excessively negative or biased.
- The grammar is poor and words are misspelled.

ACCURATE

An accurate source will provide factual information that can be backed by evidence.

Tips for determining your source's accuracy:

- Look for information that is up-to-date, meaning that it will have more recent ideas and interpretations about your topic.
- Make sure the information in your source can be backed up by other sources. This is why a variety of sources is so important.
- Avoid sources that make vague or grand generalizations, for example: "Everyone felt the same way about this issue..."

BALANCED

Balanced sources are fair and reasonable in their discussion of the topic at hand.

To determine whether or not your source is balanced, take these points into consideration:

- Watch out for its tone and language. If a source resorts to name calling it could be biased and unreasonable.
- Look out for statements of excessive significance, for example: "This was the most important event ever."

SUPPORTED

Good sources are evidence-based, meaning their conclusions are supported by facts. You should be wary of a source that doesn't show its use of evidence or identify its sources.

Find out if your source is supported by:

- Checking the source's sources. Are the facts backed up with legitimate evidence?
- Looking at the source's bibliography. Are they using a variety of sources?

PRIMARY SOURCES

We know primary sources are generally from the time of the topic you're researching or are from someone who witnessed or participated in an event. These sources tend to be, but are not limited to:

- Diaries
- Manuscript collections
- Letters
- Photographs
- Government records
- Interviews
- Autobiographies

You can find primary sources in libraries and archives, historical societies, museums, or even from people you know!

WHY ARE PRIMARY SOURCES SO IMPORTANT?

- Primary sources provide insight into how people felt at the time, what their personal experience was, their emotions and their reactions.
- Primary sources can fill in holes left by your secondary sources.
- Primary sources can give you information that other people might not have yet found.
- Primary sources allow you to make your own interpretation and analysis rather than relying on what other people think or have said about your topic.

Primary sources help in ways that secondary sources can't, but that doesn't mean they're more important.

Keep in mind that:

- While primary sources can sometimes be more reliable than secondary sources, you still need to be just as critical when determining their credibility, especially if you found them online.
- It can be tricky to determine whether a source is primary or secondary. Be careful not to cite them incorrectly in your annotated bibliography.

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Initial Research

- Your initial (secondary) research should help you to gain an overall understanding of your topic (or potential topics).
- If you are still trying to determine your topic, this research should help you to solidify your decision.
- An ideal place to begin is by looking through reliable online resources and visiting your local library.
- Through initial research, you should be familiarizing yourself with your topic in history, starting to recognize various patterns, as well as making connections back to your theme.
- Good secondary research includes reading at least one book that will provide context on the topic you are researching.



TIP: While you should refrain from using sources such as Wikipedia or similar unreliable web-encyclopedias, they may be useful for directing you toward other sources. Ultimately, though, you should try not to use too many online sources, as that does not reflect wide research.

Types of Sources

As you may have learned from conducting research in the past, there are two types of sources you will be using: primary sources, and secondary sources.

Type of Source	National History Day® Definition (nhd.org)	Examples
Primary Sources	<i>"...the creator of the source was an actual participant in or a contemporary of a historical moment."</i>	documents, artifacts, photographs, autobiographies, songs/poems
Secondary Sources	<i>"...not created first-hand by someone who participated in the historical era... based on the historian's reading of primary sources."</i>	articles, books, biographies



TIP: As the CHD motto states, "student choice, student voice." Students should be utilizing primary sources (and background knowledge they've gathered from secondary sources) to draw their own conclusions. This is critical.

Both types of sources are very important—each with their own places.

Secondary Sources:

- help to create a large picture and enhance your understanding of historical context
- provide various analyses (from historians, researchers, etc.)
- direct you toward primary sources



TIP: Check the footnotes and bibliographies of secondary sources. They often direct you toward other valuable sources related to your topic—both secondary and primary.

Primary Sources:

- allow you to personally analyze history
- allow you to make your own conclusions
- help to cultivate your skills as a historian

The NHD Rule Book stresses the need for students to use their own voice in projects. It's important to use secondary sources in your research, but ultimately the conclusions students reach should be their own.

Research Links:

[CHD Student Research](#)

NHD Video Links:

[What Is a Primary Source?](#)

[What Is a Secondary Source?](#)

[Mining Wikipedia](#)

[Wide Research](#)

[Historical Context](#)

[Historical Significance](#)

[Student Voice](#)

[How to Use Google Books](#)

[Smart Site Searching](#)

[Smart Searching the Library of Congress](#)

[LOC Resources](#)



Active Research

Interviews



TIP: Is there anyone that may have participated in part of your topic's history available to be interviewed?

- use interviews to understand various points of view/analyses
- may be over the phone, through email, or in-person
 - email: easiest, though may be less personal
 - if phone/in-person, recording is strongly suggested
 - ask for the interviewee's permission to record them
 - phone: call recorder apps are available for smartphones
- prepare specific questions ahead of time



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use interview answers in project (as quotations) and as a guideline for further research • send a thank you note following the interview <div>  TIP: Tell people about your project! Past History Day students have found great interviewees just by word-of-mouth. </div>
Visiting Sites/ Museums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if possible, visit various sites/museums to see photos, paintings, artifacts, or locations that will provide insight on your project • plan/schedule visits in advance (at least a few weeks before the contest deadline) • if conducting research at an archive, museum, or historical society, call first to ask about visiting policy, process of pulling documents, and other details • make sure to check websites or call ahead to see if the site is open and to schedule an appointment. • if you can't visit in person, contact the organization to ask how they may be able to help you. <div>  TIP: While NHD discourages students from interviewing historians or experts, they may be a helpful resource for navigating a museum or archives and may be able to help you find what you are looking for at the institution. In some cases, historians who have written extensively on a topic may have a personal collection of primary sources that they would allow you access to. Don't be afraid to ask! </div>

Further Research

Your research should include information from a variety of primary and secondary sources. History Day Judges greatly value extensive research that includes a variety of types of sources. Judges want to see more than just online resources, but ones that have been found at a library, historical society, museum, or archive.


Resource Bank

Places to Visit

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since wide research is valued by History Day (and is a judging criteria), your resources should go beyond online and book studies. • Even if your topic is not local, there are several state organizations that serve as very helpful resources and are partners of <i>Connecticut History Day</i>.
	TIP: Check online or email ahead of time to plan your visit with the research center. Tell the facility you are a student researching for History Day. Some (that have admission fees) may provide History Day participant discounts.

Facility Name	Information
Connecticut Democracy Center at Connecticut's Old State House	Lead sponsor of <i>Connecticut History Day</i> . Connecticut's Old State House served as a state capital between 1796 and 1878. The building is open for tours. Location of State History Day office.
Connecticut State Library	A great place to research! The State Library has the State Archives and Museum of Connecticut History. Free admission. They have a section of their website dedicated to History Day .
Connecticut League of Museums (CLM)	CLM builds connections among those who preserve and share the stories and objects of our past. Great resource for finding local archives and museums to visit.
Hartford History Center at the Hartford Public Library	Archive focused on interpreting Hartford's past.
New Haven Museum	Co-sponsor of New Haven region. Great resource for researching earliest days of New Haven Colony, up through the 21 st century.
Archives & Special Collections, University of Connecticut Libraries	Archive collection ranges from the official records of UConn to records and papers of CT leaders and businesses to specialized rare book and non-print collections. Has a strong CT and New England focus.
Connecticut Historical Society	Museum, library, research, and education center. Admission to the Research Center is free for History Day students.
Local Museums and Historical Societies	Great primary source material can be found in your local museum or historical society. Examples include the New England Air Museum , Harriet Beecher Stowe Center , Kent Historical Society , Lebanon Historical Society , Litchfield Historical Society , New

	London County Historical Society , Salisbury Association Historical Society , Stonington Historical Society , Torrington Historical Society , and the CT River Museum to name a few.
Pequot Library	Library and archive focusing on the Southport/Fairfield area.
Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center	The Mashantucket Pequot Museum & Research Center provides information on the environmental history of the region, as well as the settlement and history of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation spanning thousands of years.
Fairfield Museum and History Center	Archive and Museum focusing on the Fairfield area.
Connecticut Sons of the American Revolution	CT SAR offers many online resources in addition to the three properties you can visit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nathan Hale Schoolhouse in East Haddam • Trumbull War Office in Lebanon • Nathan Hale Schoolhouse in New London
Mystic Seaport	Mystic Seaport offers visitors an exciting hands-on experience into maritime history. Additionally they offer extensive research tools on site and digitally.
Jewish Historical Society of Fairfield County	The Jewish Historical Society of Fairfield County provides historical and educational materials and information about the Jewish community of Fairfield County and serves the community through its membership and its archival resources.
Connecticut Landmarks	CT Landmarks manages nine historical properties across the state. Please check the website for specifics of historical periods and topics for each property.

Universities & Colleges	Connecticut has numerous institutions of higher learning which can serve as great resources. Some may have archives or allow you to use their library. Call first to check out the school's policy!	
		<p>TIP: Institutions of higher education also serve as great places to further research utilizing oral history. Libraries may have transcripts and/or recordings of interviews or they may note certain individuals in other sources that you could then reach out in order to conduct your own primary source interviews.</p> <p>NHD has recently reaffirmed their position, dissuading students from interviewing professors or professional historians (unless an interview with him/her could qualify as a primary source).</p>

	<p>According to the NHD Rulebook: "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."</p>
WCSU Library	Various museums, libraries, and university collections participate in this portal showing what each has available as well as making some resources available online.
UConn Library Archives & Special Collections	Utilize the resources available both in-person and online at the University of Connecticut Library's Archives and Special Collections for primary source research.
The Watkinson Library – Trinity College	The emphasis is on local and cultural history, with manuscripts complementing the Library's rich printed holdings in Americana. The Watkinson Library Recording and Music collection is composed of early recordings, hand-cranked phonographs, and sheet music. The digital exhibit section is not to be missed!

Internet Resources






In addition, there are also several online resources to utilize. You should also consider conducting research through the presidential libraries.

Website	Focus
ConnecticutHistory.org	A great starting point. Has a History Day page; is a great place to read secondary articles and get ideas for primary research.
The Association for the Study of Connecticut History (ASCH)	ASCH promotes the study of the history of Connecticut. It publishes the <i>Connecticut History Review</i> , the only academic journal devoted to the history of Connecticut and has a fall and spring conference. Many academic libraries carry the Journal; past issues may be purchased.
researchIT CT	Houses historic and current newspapers.
Connecticut Explored , the magazine of Connecticut History	Explore this website for information on back issues and free podcasts.
Connecticut History Illustrated	A great resource for history-related digital resources of libraries, archives, museums, galleries, historical societies and other CT heritage institutions. Includes a variety of material, from documents to images, from maps to audio and video.

Connecticut Digital Newspaper Project	A great resource for finding historically significant CT newspapers. They have been digitized from microfilm of newspapers published between 1836-1922.
Connecticut's Old State House Programs	Connecticut's Old State House offers recordings of programs on a variety of topics with speakers who are authorities in the subject. The topics range throughout history and can be a good resource for students.
Connecticut Network (CT-N)	Connecticut Network offers recordings of programs on a variety of topics with speakers who are authorities in their fields. The topics covered by CT-N range throughout history, government, and civics.
Connecticut Supreme Court Historical Society	Connecticut Supreme Court Historical Society's purpose is to promote and preserve the state's judicial and constitutional tradition. Their site offers numerous resources and databases for research related to State Supreme Court cases and other topics related to CT law.
CT Women's Hall of Fame	Discover Connecticut's remarkable women and the power of their stories! Our Inductees' histories form the foundation of all of our educational resources. Each inductee page has biographical information along with relevant links and additional audio/video materials. You can browse the inductees alphabetically, by category (area of achievement) or by time period.
Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History	Information sorted by era; online exhibitions; primary sources available from their extensive collection; multimedia including video series. Specific resources for teachers. Subscriptions to the website are free for all K-12 teachers.
NY Public Library Digital Collections	This site, featuring more than 800,000 digital items, is a living database with new materials added every day, featuring prints, photographs, maps, manuscripts, streaming video, and more.
Osher Map Library : Osher Map Library and Smith Center for Cartographic Education (OML) at the University of Southern Maine	With nearly half a million cartographic items, the collections housed within the are global in scope and date back to 1475. Currently there are over 75,000 items (maps, atlases, rare books, posters, games, etc.) available to view freely online for educational and research purposes
Ken Burns in the Classroom Collection	Ken Burns and his collaborators have been creating historical documentary films for more than forty years. Known for a signature style that brings primary source documents, images, and archival video footage to life on screen, these films present the opportunity to pose thought-provoking questions for students, and introduce new ideas, perspectives, and primary sources.
Chronicling America	Search America's historic newspaper pages from 1770-1963 or use the U.S. Newspaper Directory to find information about American

	newspapers published between 1690-present. Chronicling America is sponsored jointly by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Library of Congress.
Ad*Access : Duke University Library Repository	Over 7,000 U.S. and Canadian advertisements covering five product categories - Beauty and Hygiene, Radio, Television, Transportation, and World War II propaganda - dated between 1911 and 1955.
Europeana	This website offers access to millions of items from providing institutions across Europe. Discover artworks, books, music, and videos on art, newspapers, archaeology, fashion, science, sport, and much more.
American Archive of Public Broadcasting	The American Archive of Public Broadcasting contains more than 50,000 hours of digitized public broadcasting programs and original materials.

Websites and Social Media

	HistoryDayCT.org		NHD.org
	Connecticut History Day		@CTHistoryDay
	CTHistoryDay		

Notetaking

Organization:

- You may choose to organize your notes either digitally, traditionally (using paper), or a combination of both.
- You should develop your own system depending on whatever works best for you.

Paper Organization	Digital Organization
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Binder/File System• Index Cards• Historical Journal• Note-cards or a combination	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evernote (free)• Google Drive (free)• Microsoft OneNote• Noodletools (an especially good choice if you are citing your sources with an account to Noodletools)

Highlighting and Annotations:

- If you are able to, highlight your sources (either on paper or digitally). Feel free to use different colors (e.g., green for potential quotations, blue for key figures, purple for relation to theme).
- Make clear notes. If you cannot alter the source, use sticky notes to capture important reference points.
- Outlining sources can be helpful as well as your bibliography grows so that you can reference major points without having to go back and re-read full sources.
- In the end, the depth of your notes and how you organize them should be conducive to your own research.

Working Bibliography:

Be sure to consistently keep a working bibliography. Your citations do not have to be finalized but include enough information to be able to properly format them later. For each source, you should also make note of whether it is primary or secondary and how it

helped you.

The next section will go into more detail about the required Annotated bibliography. For an overview, you can watch [Annotated Bibliography \(Overview\)](#).

Research Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Use this worksheet to guide your research on your topic for National History Day's 2025 theme *Rights & Responsibilities in History*. You can make additional copies for each source.

NHD Topic: _____

Source name:

Research question(s):

Type of Source:

PRIMARY or SECONDARY

Book Newspaper Website Artifact
Photograph Video Interview Other

Information from source

Source citation information:

Checklist: Researching Your Topic

- ☐ I have reviewed the descriptions of primary and secondary sources.
- ☐ I have located and am reading at least ONE book written by a trusted secondary source to help me understand my topic.
- ☐ I have located and am evaluating secondary source items connected to my topic.
- ☐ I have located and am evaluating primary source items connected to my topic.
- ☐ I am conducting research that reflects a variety of sources (digital, print, and physical).
- ☐ I am conducting research that reflects a variety of perspectives.
- ☐ I am identifying possible bias within my sources and balancing this bias with wide research.
- ☐ I am using my completed *BALANCE* graphic organizer to guide and revise my research questions.
- ☐ I understand that I am required to use _____ (choose one) as the style for my bibliography:
 - ☐ MLA
 - ☐ Chicago
- ☐ I have created a draft of my Annotated Bibliography that:
 - ☐ Is sorted into two sections: PRIMARY and SECONDARY
 - ☐ Is sorted alphabetically within each section
 - ☐ Includes a draft of my annotation for each source, describing how I used this source AND how it helped me understand my topic.
- ☐ I have reviewed the NHD Rule Book about the annotated bibliography and plagiarism.

What questions I have after completing this section?



Lesson Six: Writing an Annotated Bibliography for History Day

GOAL: Understand how to write an Annotated Bibliography for Connecticut History Day

Your annotated bibliography serves two main purposes: to cite all of the sources you used and to show how you conducted your research. The judges will review your Annotated Bibliography to understand the scope of your research and how your sources helped shape your thinking. It's very important to create this document as you proceed with your research. Waiting until the end will be time-consuming and problematic if you cannot recall where you found something.

In this section, you will build on the overview from the previous section to correctly format your citations and include the necessary annotations for each source you've consulted.

Tasks/Activities:

1. Begin by discussing the importance of identifying sources for their research.
What is a bibliography? Why do writers have to follow specific formats for citing their sources? Which format will be required for their project? What is an annotation?
2. Watch "[What's an Annotated Bibliography? \(Overview\)](#)" and the "[What's an Annotated bibliography? \(Citations\)](#)"
3. Review the teacher preferred style (MLA or Chicago) and begin to format your initial list of sources.
4. Watch "[What's an Annotated Bibliography? \(Annotations\)](#)" and add annotations to your existing source citations by addressing these questions:
 - How did you use the source?
 - How did the source help you to understand the topic?
5. Continue to add sources and annotations as you proceed through your project's research and development. You must edit and revise the Annotated Bibliography before final submission of your project.
6. Refer to the NHD website's [Annotated Bibliography](#) page for more information and examples.
7. When writing your annotations use different sentence starters or transition phrases to enhance the readability. Check out the ***Annotation Sentence Starters*** for ideas. Your annotations cannot exceed THREE sentences.

8. Periodically throughout your writing process ask a classmate or trusted adult to review your Annotated Bibliography. You can have them use the ***Annotated Bibliography Peer Review Sheet***.
9. Review and complete the ***Writing the Annotated Bibliography Checklist***.

Annotation Sentence Starters

Your annotations are expected to be 1-3 sentences in length. Each annotation explains:

- How the source helped you to understand the topic
- How you used the source

Try some of these sentence starters to prevent using “This source...” every time.

Remember, if you are working in a group, your annotations should use words like “we” and “our.” If you are working alone, your annotations should include “I” and “my.”

- This book helped me/us understand...
- This document was important to my/our topic because...
- After reading this newspaper article I/we...
- I/We used this speech to...
- This website was...
- I/We found out that...
- This memoir provided me/us with...
- I/We learned that...
- This manuscript showed me/us that...
- I/We had a new perspective on our topic after reading this source because...
- This interview talked about...
- This book helped me/us to understand our topic better because...

Stuck? Feel like you're repeating yourself?

- Pretend that you're describing the book/website/photo to your teacher. Try describing the author's point of view in the source.
- Did the source surprise or shock you? Tell us more.
- Was this one of your favorite sources? Tell us why.
- Be specific. Was there one particularly important part of the source?
- Did the source lead you to new sources? Explain which ones.

Peer Review Annotated Bibliography Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Use this worksheet to guide your peer review of an annotated bibliography for National History Day's 2025 theme *Rights & Responsibilities in History*.

Whose annotated bibliography are you evaluating?

1. Which style format is used (MLA or Chicago)?
 - a. Do you notice any inconsistencies with the citation formatting?
2. Is the annotated bibliography divided into PRIMARY SOURCES and SECONDARY SOURCES?
3. Are the sources alphabetized within each section?
4. Does each source have a brief (1-3 sentences) annotation explaining how the source was used **and** how it helped the person understand the topic?
5. What other suggestions can you offer?

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Checklist: Writing the Annotated Bibliography

- ☐ I have watched the Annotated Bibliography-Overview video.
- ☐ I have watched the videos for Citations and Annotations.
- ☐ I am correctly formatting each source's entry according to my designated style format.
- ☐ I am updating my Annotated Bibliography as I proceed with my research.
- ☐ I am keeping PRIMARY and SECONDARY sources separated.
- ☐ I am alphabetizing, according to the style format's requirements, within each of the Primary and Secondary sections.
- ☐ I am writing annotations for each source, describing:
 - How I used the source
 - How it help me understand my topic
- ☐ I am using a variety of sentence starters in my annotations to keep my writing fresh.
- ☐ I have limited my annotations to 1-3 sentences.
- ☐ I have reviewed the NHD Rule Book about the annotated bibliography and plagiarism.
- ☐ I have asked a peer or trusted adult to review my Annotated Bibliography at least once.

What questions I have after completing this section?



Lesson Seven: Writing a Thesis Statement for History Day

GOAL: Understand how to write a thesis statement for Connecticut History Day

In this section you will learn more about how to develop and revise a thesis statement for your History Day project. Remember that a History Day project is essentially an argumentative writing activity. You have to present an argument, prove it through a variety of carefully chosen pieces of evidence, and conclude with an explanation of the historical significance.

Writing a thesis is a PROCESS: you will write, revise, write some more, and polish. This section provides several activities to assist you with this process. Your teacher may ask you to complete some or all depending on your experience with argumentative writing.

Tasks/Activities:

1. Participate in a class discussion about what you know about thesis statements.
 - *What is a thesis statement? What is the goal of a thesis statement? What should a good thesis statement include?*
2. Watch the 'What's Your Point?' [video](#).
3. Use the handout ***Comparing Thesis Statements*** for examples of thesis statements and guidance on how to begin writing. This handout has examples for the Junior (gr. 6-8) and Senior (gr. 9-12) Divisions.
4. Practice identifying the characteristics of a thesis statement and revising an example thesis. Share your results with a partner, group, or class.
5. Draft a thesis statement based on your research and have classmates' peer-review using the ***NHD Thesis and Historical Argument*** worksheet and the ***Thesis Statement Peer Review*** worksheet.
 - Does the thesis statement define the topic and stance? Is there a clear argument to the thesis statement? What do you like about this thesis? What can be changed to improve the thesis?
6. Review and complete the ***Writing a Thesis Statement Checklist***.

Thesis Statement

The necessary place to begin with starting your project is with your thesis statement. A thesis statement is developed towards the end of the research process.



Your thesis statement is the backbone of your project—summarizing what you have researched, the points you are trying to convey, and its relation to the theme. It is the central thought that holds your entire project together.

For a History Day Thesis, there are three major components:

<u>THESIS</u> =	<u>TOPIC</u> + <u>THEME</u> + <u>IMPACT</u>
------------------------	--

Considering the thesis statement's high importance, you should be sure to take time in writing it well; your thesis is essentially a reflection of all of your hard work. The thesis statement should be written towards the end of your research.

SHOULD	SHOULD <u>NOT</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• expresses your topic's significance• demonstrates how the topic relates to the NHD theme• states the argument that will be proven in your project• include "theme" words	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• state simple facts• contain rhetorical questions• contain "what if" scenarios• be vague

Some tips to ensure quality within your thesis:

- Make sure the **theme is central**.
- Including limited references to context (such as year) are okay, but generally specific facts should be omitted.
- Don't be afraid to have your thesis be more than one sentence. Just make sure every word is important.
- Your thesis gives specifics to the impact of your topic (short and long term).
- Your thesis presents the argument that is presented within your project, based on research.

Although there is no one "correct" way to write a thesis, many successful students:

- Begin with a general sentence/ clause capturing the topic
- Transition to another sentence that establishes how your topic relates to the theme and its historical importance.
- Do NOT include:
 - information such as when someone was born.

- present a simple fact as the core of your thesis (that there is no debate over)
- other information that does not contribute to an academic argument.

Run your thesis by a teacher if you are unsure of yours or would like feedback.

Handout: Comparing Thesis Statements (JUNIOR)

Looking at first drafts and revised versions of thesis statements can help you understand what you should be working towards in your own work. Look at the following thesis statements. What are some problems or positive characteristics of each?

A strong thesis gives **specific details** and **goes beyond facts** to discuss a topic's **significance** and show the topic's **theme connection**. Keep in mind that even the "good" statements are still a work in progress!

	Needs Improvement	Better	Good
Silent Spring	<p>Rachel Carson wrote <i>Silent Spring</i> in 1962 and forever changed the environmental movement in the United States.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be more specific. Saying that the book "forever changed" history is too broad. Needs a theme connection. 	<p>Rachel Carson became a leader for the environmental movement in the 1960s when she published <i>Silent Spring</i>. People were outraged about the harm being done to the environment and the book sold over a million copies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public response and sales figures are short term reactions. Dig deeper for long-term significance. Needs a theme connection. 	<p>Rachel Carson became a leader for the environmental movement in the early 1960s when she published her controversial book, <i>Silent Spring</i>, in response to the use of dangerous pesticides. Carson's book opened new frontiers for environmental regulations, leading to the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency.</p>
Mahatma Gandhi	<p>Gandhi led a march to the Arabian Sea to collect salt in April 1930. Why do you think he would do that?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs a theme connection. Doesn't mention significance in history. Avoid asking questions. Provide answers based on your research. 	<p>In April 1930, Gandhi led a 240 mile march. This was a non-violent protest against the British and their taxes on India.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs more details about the impact and reason for the march. Needs a theme connection. 	<p>Mahatma Gandhi led thousands of Indians on a march to the Arabian Sea in April 1930 to protest the British Salt Tax. As many Indians hoped for the possibility of independence, the Salt March helped establish nonviolent resistance as a successful path for pushing the frontier boundaries of equality.</p>
Delano Grape Strike	<p>In 1965, farm workers in California went on strike for better working conditions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs specifics. What led to the strike? What did they do on strike? Were they successful? What is the significance in history? Needs a theme connection. 	<p>When California farm owners ignored laws on workers' rights and refused to negotiate, immigrant farm workers went on strike and used a successful grape boycott against the owners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs more information about workers' actions. Needs more details about the significance in history. Needs a theme connection. 	<p>In 1965, California grape farm workers led by Filipino and Chicano labor organizations began a mass strike. By calling for a national boycott of California grapes, they changed the frontier for labor workers and forced farm owners to negotiate. This led to union rights and increased pay for thousands of farm workers.</p>
Mayo Clinic	<p>The Mayo Clinic is one of the most prominent and well-respected hospitals of today.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs more specifics. What people or groups were involved? Needs more significance. What makes the Mayo Clinic so important? Needs a theme connection. 	<p>Founded by Mother Alfred Moes and Doctors William and Charles Mayo as St. Mary's Hospital in 1899, the Mayo Clinic's unique success has made it one of the world's most respected hospitals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs more significance. What makes the Mayo Clinic so important? Needs a theme connection. 	<p>Since its founding by Mother Alfred Moes and Doctors William and Charles Mayo in 1899, the Mayo Clinic has forged the frontier of better patient care. By using teams of specialists and minimizing testing, Mayo's innovative but controversial approach has made it one of the world's premier hospitals.</p>

National History Day in Minnesota 2023

Reprinted Courtesy of Minnesota History Day

Handout: Comparing Thesis Statements (SENIOR)

Looking at first drafts and revised versions of thesis statements can help you understand what you should be working towards in your own work. Look at the following thesis statements. What are some problems or positive characteristics of each?

A strong thesis gives **specific details** and **goes beyond facts** to discuss a topic's **significance** and show the topic's **theme connection**. Keep in mind that even the "Good" statements are still a work in progress!

	Needs Improvement	Better	Good
Hormel Strike	<p>The Hormel Strike of 1985 is one of the most important strikes in Minnesota history.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs more specifics. What people or groups were involved? Needs more significance. Why is this strike so important? Needs a theme connection. 	<p>In 1985, employees of the Hormel Factory in Austin, Minnesota went on strike to demand better working conditions and pay. Many lost their jobs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go beyond just facts. Needs more significance. What did this strike lead to? Needs a theme connection. 	<p>Led by the United Food and Commercial Workers' Local P-9, employees of the Hormel Factory in Austin, Minnesota went on strike for thirteen months in 1985, demanding better working conditions and wages. While the strike failed, internal conflict emerged within the union movement, expanding the frontiers of parent unions showing greater support to locals.</p>
Apollo-Soyuz	<p>The Apollo-Soyuz Test Project was the first international space mission.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go beyond just facts. Needs more significance. How did the mission change history? Needs a theme connection. 	<p>The international space mission Apollo-Soyuz Test Project established a successful frontier between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs more significance. How did the mission change history? Theme connection could be stronger. What is the frontier? 	<p>During tense Cold War conflict over communist and capitalist systems, U.S. and Soviet spacecrafts docked in the first international space mission in 1975. The Apollo-Soyuz Test Project led to greater cooperation between the superpowers as they explored the new frontiers of space.</p>
ACT UP	<p>In the 1980s, the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) pressured the government for a more effective treatment of AIDS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go beyond just facts. Needs more specifics. How did they pressure officials? Needs significance. What changed as a result? Needs a theme connection. 	<p>In the 1980s, the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) combined confrontational protests with specific policy proposals to successfully pressure public health authorities to improve treatments for AIDS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go beyond just facts. Needs more significance. How did treatment of patients change? Needs a theme connection. 	<p>Founded in 1987, the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) used confrontational protests to show the need for a better response to the AIDS epidemic and to force officials to negotiate. Through this "inside-outside" strategy, ACT UP accelerated the scientific frontier on the safety of AIDS medication, for which the adoption of patient advocacy policies are still in place today.</p>
Highlander Folk School	<p>Highlander Folk School helped train many activists during the Civil Rights Movement, leading to important victories.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go beyond just facts. Needs more specifics. What about Highlander made their students effective activists? Needs a theme connection. 	<p>In the 1950s, Highlander Folk School trained student activists in strategies to learn about and unite the communities they organized.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go beyond just facts. Needs more significance. What was the long-term impact? Needs a theme connection. 	<p>As one of the South's few integrated schools in the 1950s, Highlander Folk School created a new frontier for racial equality by training activists to bring understanding and unity within the communities they organized. Activists who studied at Highlander led sit-ins, boycotts, and other campaigns that successfully pressured officials to end segregation laws across the United States.</p>

National History Day in Minnesota 2023

ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE THESIS STATEMENT

A thesis statement is a promise to the reader or viewer of your project as to what your project will prove. It is the answer to your basic research question. It is a key element in making people understand your position or point of view.

An effective thesis statement for your History Day project, regardless of the category in which you are competing, should have all of the following elements:

1. It should clearly state your topic.
2. It should define the parameters (the focus) of your research.
3. It should clearly and explicitly relate your topic to the NHD theme.
4. It should be written in the form of an argument rather than a statement of fact.
5. It should convey why your topic is important or significant. How did it impact history?

The following is a typical draft of a thesis statement associated with a previous year's theme of "Breaking Barriers in History". The author *has tried* to incorporate all five elements of an effective thesis in his statement. Yet, it should not be considered a finished product. It will require further refining and editing to make sure that it delivers the thesis in the most concise and most effective way. The appropriate length of your thesis will depend on your category's limit on word count, but generally it should be 2-3 sentences.

TOPIC: John Brown's Trial

John Brown's trial, after his capture at Harpers Ferry, sparked the Civil War, which hastened the abolition of slavery in the United States thus breaking the major barrier to the attainment of equality and citizenship for people of color. Brown's trial was a national media event. During this trial, Brown's passionate denunciation of the legal existence of slavery and his insistence that it could only be ended by force further fueled the national debate, already raging on this issue. His remarks, as well as his conviction and subsequent execution, were all prominently reported in every major newspaper in the country on both sides of the Mason-Dixon Line. These reports inflamed passions and sharpened the division between the north and south on the issue of slavery, making further compromise impossible. When modifying the barrier ceased to be an option, the only thing left to decide was merit of the barrier's very existence. Brown was the key player forcing this decision to be made. His efforts changed America forever.

Can you find the five elements of a thesis in this draft?

1. Topic: _____

2. Parameters of research: _____

3. Relation to the theme: _____

4. Author's Argument: _____

5. Significance: _____

Thesis Challenge

Revise the statement to make it clearer and more concise (using only the words you really need) while maintaining all five of the needed elements.

(There is no one right answer! It is a matter of judgment.)

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on its right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

- * Can your classmate find all five key elements in your thesis statement?
- * Does your classmate's identification of those elements on the list agree with what you identified as the elements?

To see how the author of the draft sees the elements consult the box below.

1.	Topic:	John Brown's trial after his raid on Harpers Ferry
2.	Parameters of research:	The effects of the trial on the abolition of slavery
3.	Relation to the theme:	It led to breaking the main barrier to the attainment of rights by people of color.
4.	Author's Argument:	The trial made further compromise impossible thus setting off the Civil War.
5.	Significance:	It led to the end of slavery in the United States.



NHD Thesis and Historical Argument



Your historical argument states the central point or focus of your project in two or three sentences. It is sometimes called a thesis or claim. Historians create historical arguments after carefully analyzing evidence from the past. The evidence that supports your argument will come from the primary and secondary sources that you discover during your research.

Your argument should reflect your analysis of the historical evidence that you gathered. Your historical argument must make a meaningful connection to the theme and show why your topic is significant in history. It must be incorporated into your project and be clear to those who read or view it. However, labeling your historical argument in or on your project is not required.

Example for the theme, Breaking Barriers in History: *The 1919 Treaty of Versailles subjected Germany to significant economic penalties. The treaty created an economic barrier between Germany and the rest of Europe, which led to hyperinflation and, when coupled with the Great Depression, the rise of the Nazi Party.*

(NHD Contest Rule Book, 2020. p. 8)

Part A: Crafting a Strong Thesis

Step 1: Historical Context

Once you have selected a topic, identify some background information to help establish historical context.

Who were the individuals/groups involved?	
When did this occur?	
Where did this occur?	
Why did this occur?	
What was happening locally in relation to your topic?	
What was happening nationally/globally in relation to your topic?	
What social norms/cultural beliefs played a role in the events related to your topic?	

Step 2: Gathering Historical Evidence

Locate and identify 3-4 primary sources or events specific to your topic. Consider documents, events, speeches, images, newspapers or addresses, etc. that can be a source of information. Consider using the [National Archives Document Analysis Worksheets](#) to complete your exploration once you've chosen your documents.

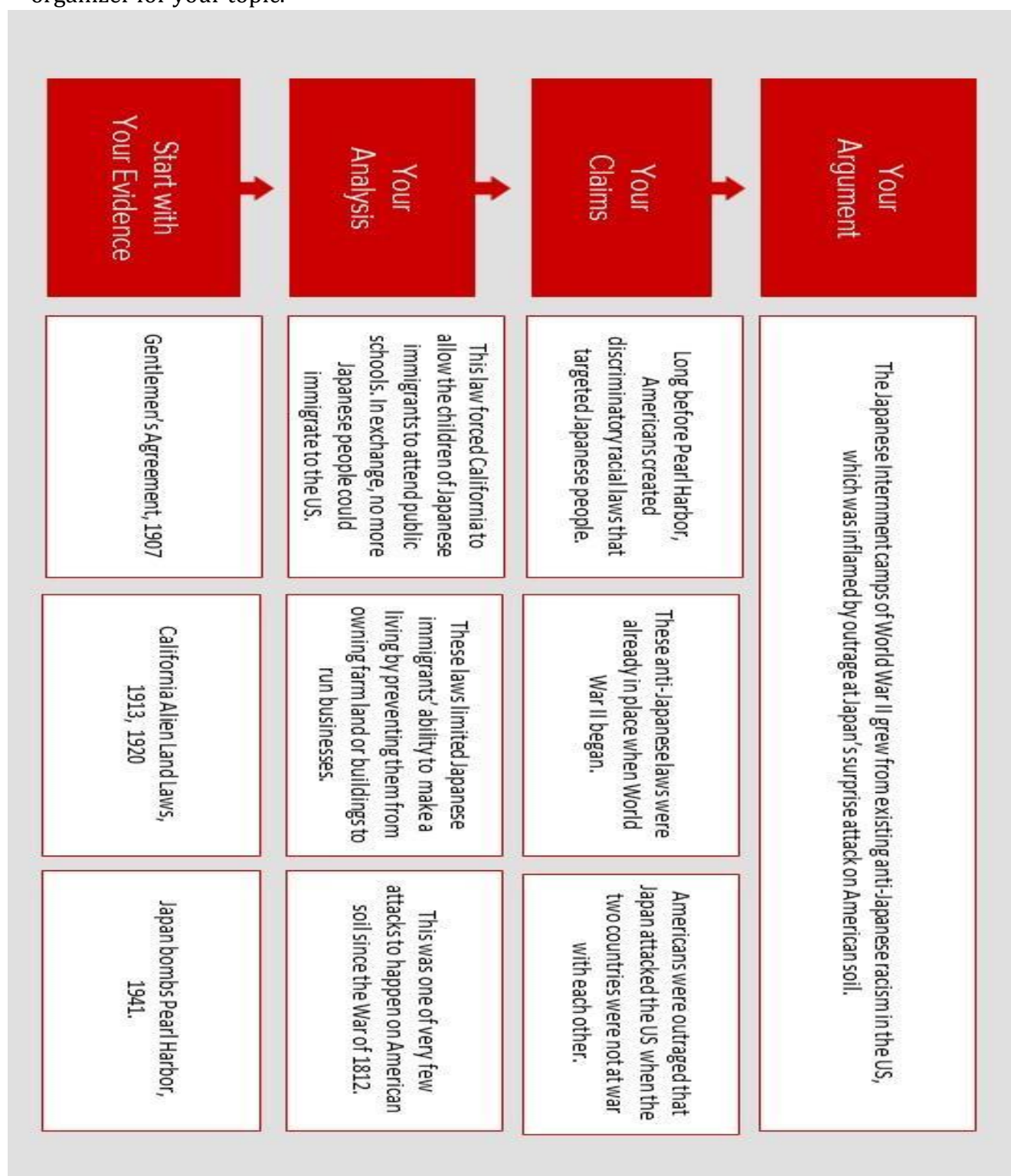
Step 3: Analyzing the Evidence

Analyze your primary source research and summarize each piece of evidence. Examining primary documents related to your topic at the beginning of your research will encourage you to draw **your own conclusions** about your topic and how it connects to the theme.

Primary Source/Event (include where you found the information)	Summary in your own words	Analysis (How does this source/event impact or relate to your topic?)

Step 4: Developing Your Argument

Use your analysis to develop your historical argument. Keep the theme in mind as you are fitting these pieces of evidence together. Review the example below, and then complete the organizer for your topic.



Your Argument	Your Claims	Your Analysis	Start with Your Evidence

Courtesy of Utah History Day

Step 5: State Your Project Thesis

A strong History Day thesis contains four elements: clearly stated topic, defined parameters, annual theme, and historical argument (which indicates the historical impact of your topic). It is your job to blend these elements into 1-2 powerful sentences. Review the ***Comparing Thesis Statements*** handout for examples.

Topic:

Parameters (Date, time period, range of years, etc.):

Theme words:

Your argument (A debatable argument, NOT a statement of fact):

Thesis draft: Write your initial thesis here. Keep in mind, you will revise this more than once before your project is finalized.



Ask a peer to read your thesis statement and identify each element by:

- Drawing a circle around the topic
- Drawing a box around the parameters
- Drawing a star above the theme words
- Underlining the argument and considering an opposition to the argument
- (If this activity is completed digitally, students can assign different colors and highlight the text)

Revised thesis: Review the feedback you received on your initial thesis draft. Make improvements to the statement here.

Part B: Supporting Your Thesis by Thinking Like a Historian

Now that you've identified your argument, you will need more research to support your claims. Consider who was involved, what impact was made on society (or a portion of society), and what was gained or lost because of your topic.

When selecting secondary sources, you must consider several factors to identify potential biases and the overall credibility. These elements will help you better understand the author's interpretation.

- Author's background, purpose and potential biases
- Intended audience
- Identify the author's thesis and arguments
- What primary sources did the author rely upon?
- What facts were presented by the author?
- What opinions were presented by the author?
- Is the source reliable and convincing? Why or why not?
- How does the source relate to your topic? How does it add to what you already know about your topic?

Part C: Explain the Historical Significance

YOU make the case for why your topic is significant in history and how it relates to the annual theme. Consider the message you want your audience to understand based on your conclusions. Be sure to provide evidence to support your conclusions.

- Short Term Outcomes (What changed immediately or soon after? What didn't change?)
- Long Term Outcomes (Can you show logical connections between your topic and events 10, 20, or more years later?)
- Why does this topic matter to your audience?

Part D: Putting It All Together

The magic happens within a History Day project when you can synthesize your research and analysis into a cohesive argument that is supported by relevant primary and secondary sources. You're on target when you have:

- A well-formulated historical argument supported by thorough analysis, and the annual theme woven throughout the project.
- Integrated body of credible research into a fully developed historical argument.
- Used primary sources to develop the historical argument.
- Analyzed the short-term and long-term causes of the historical event(s).
- Integrated multiple perspectives throughout the historical argument.
- Verified that all historical information is accurate.
- Drawn an evidence-based conclusion about the topic's significance in history and analyzed the topic's short-term and long-term impact.
- Ensured your ideas, analysis, argument, and conclusions are original and persuasive.



(See the [NHD Evaluation rubrics](#) for more information.)

Peer Review Thesis Statement Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Use this worksheet to guide your peer review of a thesis statement for National History Day's 2025 theme *Rights & Responsibilities in History*.

Whose thesis are you evaluating? _____

7. What is the strongest or best part of their thesis statement?

a. Why is it the strongest or best part?

8. What portion of the thesis statement needs work?

a. Why and/or how does it need work?

9. If you had to rewrite their thesis statement in 1 to 3 sentences, what would it be?

Checklist: Writing the Thesis Statement

- ☐ I have watched the “What’s Your Point?” video.
- ☐ I have reviewed examples of thesis statements.
 - *Comparing Thesis Statements* handout
 - Reviewed example projects for their thesis statements either on the CT History Day website or the NHD website.
- ☐ I have completed at least one of the thesis writing activities.
- ☐ I have drafted and revised a good thesis statement for my project that:
 - Identifies my topic
 - Has clear parameters (when, where, etc.)
 - Includes the theme words
 - Is an argument that can be proven (NOT a statement of facts)
 - Explains my topics impact/significance in history
- ☐ I have received feedback on my thesis from at least one peer and one trusted adult.
- ☐ I have revised my thesis statement based on feedback I received.
- ☐ I have reviewed the NHD Rule Book about the thesis statement.

What questions I have after completing this section?



Lesson Eight: Planning a Project

GOAL: Create a project outline to be used for creating a final project

Now that you have advanced through your research and have an in-depth understanding of your topic, you should begin envisioning what your project will look like. At this point, you should finalize your decision on your presentation category.


In this section, you will take the steps to design your project based on your chosen category: paper, exhibit, documentary, performance, or website. It is very important to review the category specific rules and evaluation form throughout the completion of your project.

Tasks/Activities:

1. Gather your research and thesis statement to be used in helping assemble your final project.
2. Watch the [Project Organization](#) video. This video will be helpful in demonstrating how to organize a project and how to select the best evidence to support your argument.
3. Using the **Project Planning** worksheet, begin to lay out or storyboard your project with the goal of finding the beginning, middle, and end of your narrative and figure out what research and work still needs to be completed.
4. Based on the **Project Planning** worksheet, begin to assemble your final project.
5. Review the concept of [Student Voice](#) and discuss ways you can verify your own voice is prominent within your project.
6. Use the following resources to check for rules compliance and important category-specific criteria.
 - [NHD Rulebook](#)
 - [NHD Evaluation Forms](#)
 - [NHD Category Information and Checklists](#)
7. Complete and update as needed your regional contest registration profile.
8. Review and complete the Category checklist specific to your chosen category.


Winning Project Examples

	For inspiration, look at winners from past years. While you <u>should not</u> copy others' ideas, you can examine their projects to generate ideas of your own. Students at your school may have participated in History Day and can offer helpful advice too!
--	--

	TIP: Visit NHD Project Examples to see Student Project Examples. Examples of Connecticut History Day entries can be found here .
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Use of Quotations

- Strike a balance: use enough quotes to support your main conclusions, but make sure your voice is still central throughout the project. You may want to review Student Voice in this brief [video](#).
- Some categories limit the number of student-composed words but not that of quotations.
- Appropriately used quotes can enliven a project, but they should be used judiciously.
- Do not overuse quotes. Remember, some projects like exhibits are meant to be visual.
- Quotes lend historical support to your conclusions, a critical aspect of any good project and allows you to draw in different perspectives, something that separates good from great projects.
- Properly cite all quotes, both within the project and in your annotated bibliography.


	TIP: Images and graphs are sometimes effective ways of conveying information without adding to your word limit.
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Developing a Final Entry

Spelling/Grammar and Fact Checks

Seemingly small details in a project can have a large impact on presentation. Be sure that:

- everything is spelled correctly and proper grammar is used
- all dates, names, locations, etc. are accurate

	TIP: Read your project aloud to check for spelling/grammar errors. After, ask a peer, parent, or teacher to review your project.
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	TIP: If you interviewed someone or know someone who is an expert on your topic, ask them to review your website or provide feedback.
---	--

Registering for a Regional Contest

Registration for the regional contests opens in November. Please refer to the CT History Day [website](#) for specific information regarding the registration process and deadlines.

Project Planning Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Use this worksheet to guide your final project outline for National History Day's *Rights & Responsibilities in History*.

Thesis:

Supporting arguments for thesis:

BEFORE	DURING
<p>Historical Context: What important information does your reader need to know? What happened before your topic to influence it? What was happening locally or globally to give context to your topic?</p> <p>Build up: Who are the "characters" involved? What ideas or events led up to your main event? What led to your topic? Remember to present only the information that is REALLY important to understanding what led to your topic.</p>	<p>In this portion of your project you need to get at the main event, or heart, of your topic. Be specific when you explain: What happened? When did it happen? How and why it happened? Who was involved or affected?</p> <p>Analyze your evidence and present your ideas.</p> <p>Address multiple perspectives.</p>
<p>AFTER</p> <p>Short Term: What changed right away as a result of your topic? Were these changes good or bad? Was everyone effected the same?</p> <p>Long Term: What happened years after? How did your topic change history?</p> <p>Historical Significance: What is your topic important in history? Why is it still important today?</p>	

Category Resources

Here are some planning tools specific to each category. Regardless of the planning tools you use, it is crucial that you carefully read the General and Category Specific rules in the [NHD Rule Book](#) and consult the evaluation form for your chosen category.

[Top Tips for Writing in All Categories](#)

PAPER CATEGORY

[Paper Evaluation Form](#)

[Historical Paper Project Checklist](#)

[Qualities of Good Historical Writing](#)

EXHIBIT CATEGORY

[Exhibit Evaluation Form](#)

[Exhibit Project Checklist](#)

[Exhibit Planning Graphic Organizer](#)

[Elements of an Effective Exhibit](#)

[Credits, Captions & Citations Handout](#)

DOCUMENTARY CATEGORY

[Documentary Evaluation Form](#)

[Documentary Project Checklist](#)

[Tips for Making a Great Documentary](#)

[Documentary Format Timeline](#)

PERFORMANCE CATEGORY

[Performance Evaluation Form](#)

[Performance Project Checklist](#)

[Performance Scenario Brainstorm](#)

[Performance Idea Map](#)

WEBSITE CATEGORY

[Website Evaluation Form](#)

[Website Project Checklist](#)

[Planning Your Website](#)

[Website Workbook](#)

[Credits, Captions & Citations Handout](#)



Lesson Nine: Writing a Process Paper for History Day

GOAL: Understand how to write a Process Paper for Connecticut History Day

All entries are required to write a process paper. Your process paper must include your historical argument as well as information about how you went about the History Day process—choosing your topic, conducting research, and how your topic relates to the theme. The process paper must not include quotes, images or captions.

The process paper is an important place to highlight the complexity of your research and analysis (although your project should stand alone). Explain how significant your topic was personally and in the greater scheme of history and the nuances that you could not fit into other places.

As with projects and annotated bibliographies, you should also look at the process papers of winning entries. By doing so, you will not only learn how to compose your own process paper, but also how they went about completing their successful project. Process papers can be very diverse because of the freedom it affords in formatting and explanation. Look at a few styles to get inspirations for how you may organize yours or what kind of information is critical to include.

Tasks/Activities:

1. Begin working on a process paper for your NHD project using the [NHD Rule Book](#) as a guide.
2. Review the example Process Paper to understand what is needed and what the goal of the Process Paper is.
3. Use the ***How to Write Your Process Paper*** to begin drafting your own Process Paper.
4. Ask a classmate to complete the peer review exercise using the ***Process Paper Peer Review Worksheet*** to evaluate and improve each other's work.
5. Review and complete the ***Writing a Process Paper Checklist***.

Example Process Paper (word count 492):

Process Paper

After watching the film *Bridge of Spies* (2015), we realized the film's story connected to this year's History Day theme, Debate and Diplomacy: Successes, Failures, Consequences, and were excited to research the Cold War US-Soviet Spy Exchange. We conducted initial research about the Cold War and dug deeper into the conflicts between the US and USSR. We uncovered more about the swap of the American and Soviet spies, which led to us crafting an informative and creative performance. Not only did this make for an exciting project, but we also learned some important life lessons. This experience taught us that even the harshest of enemies could come together and put aside their differences to solve a problem that will help a more significant number of people in the end.

Conducting initial research was not as challenging for us as past History Day projects. At first, many of the sources we took notes on were secondary sources. Later, we found many important primary sources, for instance, a propaganda video from the US government and two essential documents. One is the transcripts for Powers' trial in Moscow, and the other is Powers' journal from his time in jail. These primary source quotes and transcripts helped accurately inform some of our scenes.

Additionally, we contacted and interviewed Francis Gary Powers' son, Gary Powers Jr. He informed us that Gary Powers' cellmate was a KGB plant, among many exciting insights! In fact, after our interview, we attended his presentation at the University of Connecticut. After attending, we changed some of our performance to make it more factually accurate. The information we found in our research led to the dialogue in our performance. Most of our dialogue for James Donovan, the American negotiator, are actual quotes from him!

We decided to use the performance format based on our successful experience performing for History Day the last two years. This was an effective way to explore this topic because we enjoy acting and scriptwriting - the performance brings the drama to life. Our process involved finding sources together and then splitting up to read and take notes. Usually, if we did more notetaking for a source, the other would have to do more annotations. We think performing history is intriguing and fun to present important information (like *Hamilton* or *Les Misérables*). Since our weekday schedule was so busy, most of our work was budgeted on weekends to ensure that our project would be complete. To-Do lists and schedules were a must to stay on top of our project due dates.

Our project connects to the theme, Debate, and Diplomacy: Successes, Failures, Consequences, through dialogue. The countries could successfully exchange the two men because of the negotiators and government officials, especially James Donovan. Diplomacy was crucial in returning Soviet Spy Rudolf Ivanovich Abel and American pilot Francis Gary Powers to their home countries. This demonstrated that even the harshest enemies could be diplomatic to solve critical debates without harmful consequences.

Courtesy of Sophie Marcus and Kalyani Tihaiya (2022)

Process Paper: A How-To

The process paper is one component of the required written materials. These materials must be typed on plain white paper and stapled in the top left corner (except for websites in which these materials are uploaded as PDFs). Assembly is in the following order: title page, process paper, and annotated bibliography. Do NOT enclose these items in a cover or binder.

Title Page

The title page includes the title of the entry, name(s) of the student(s) who developed the entry, the age division and category of the entry, and word counts/media run time. Do NOT include any additional information or illustrations on the title page. A good title for your entry is important. It will quickly introduce your topic and help the viewer understand your point of view. Ideas from your theme ought to be considered for your title. Please consult [the NHD Rule Book](#) p. 18-19 for specific requirements of each category's title page and examples of title pages.

Process Paper

The process paper is not a summary of the topic. It is **a reflection statement** of no more than 500 words explaining how you selected the topic, conducted your research, and developed your entry. It concludes with a paragraph describing how the topic fits this year's theme and why it is important in history. Students should not format this as a list of questions and answers, but as an essay using correct paragraph structure.

The process paper must include the following components:

- how you chose your topic and how your project relates to the History Day theme
- how you conducted your research
- how you selected your presentation category and created your project
- your historical argument/thesis statement
- how your topic is significant in history

How to Write Your Process Paper

One of the last items you will complete for your NHD project is the process paper. Judges read the process paper to get a window into how you created your entry. You should provide details of your work. Use “I” statements and show how your topic connects to the theme. The chart below is meant to help you compose your sentences and put together your process paper. **Remember that your process paper cannot be longer than 500 words!** Every History Day project must include a Process Paper.

Required Sections	Details to Consider/Include	Sentence Starters
How did you choose your topic? How does it relate to the annual theme?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did you begin with a broader topic and narrow to your current topic? Did you have a friend, family member, teacher help you decide? Did you watch a movie or tv show on your topic? Did you learn about it in a current or previous class? How does your topic fit with the theme? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I've always been interested in When I heard about the theme this year I thought about..... My parents and I brainstormed possible topics and the one I liked best was.....because..... I decided to research (insert your topic) to learn more about..... My topic fits this year's theme because.....
How did you conduct your research?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What process did you use? Where did you find your sources? Did you visit a major library or historical organization? Did you conduct any interviews? Which sources were the most useful? What problems did you encounter in your quest to find resources? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When I first started my research I..... Then I..... My best secondary source was..... I found a great primary source at the.....
How did you create your project?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How and why did you choose your category? Was there significant meaning behind any of the materials used (e.g., selection of a particular prop, color scheme for your website or exhibit, music for your documentary)? What was the most enjoyable or frustrating part of creating your project? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I decided to design my project like.....because..... The colors symbolize..... The layout of my information shows..... I especially enjoyed.....
What is your historical argument?	Restate your thesis. Don't just copy and paste it, but reword it.	
In what ways is your topic significant in history?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the theme words in your sentences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> My research and the documents I found provide evidence that (insert your topic) was significant in history because..... My topic is important because.....



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Process Paper Peer Review Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Use this worksheet to guide your peer review of a Process Paper for National History Day's 2025 theme *Rights & Responsibilities in History*.

Whose Process Paper are you evaluating? _____

As you read your classmate's Process Paper, please answer the following questions thoroughly to give effective feedback AND to demonstrate your review skills.

Paragraph One:

1. Does the writer briefly introduce and explain their History Day topic in a few sentences?
2. Does the writer briefly explain their process for choosing this topic?
3. Does the writer explain how the topic relates to this year's theme?
4. Please give one piece of constructive criticism for the writer. For example, is it too wordy, too brief, contains grammar or spelling errors, or are you left with questions?

Paragraph Two:

1. Does the writer adequately explain how the research was conducted? For instance, are the following questions addressed: Where did you go to find your sources? Did you visit a major library? Did you conduct any interviews? What sources were most useful? What problems did you encounter in your quest to find sources?
2. Please give one piece of constructive criticism for the writer related to this paragraph.

Paragraph Three:

1. Does the writer address the following questions?
 - a. Why did you choose the category that you did?
 - b. How did you actually create your project and what materials did you use?

- c. Was there significant meaning behind any of the materials used (e.g., selection of a particular prop, choosing the color scheme for your exhibit, incorporating music from the era in your documentary?
 - d. What was the most enjoyable or frustrating part of creating your project?
- 2. Please give one way that this paragraph could be improved or made more complete. For example, is more information needed or did the writer spend too much time on one aspect of the project?

Paragraph Four:

- 1. After reading this paragraph, do you know what the writer's historical argument/thesis statement is for their History Day project?
 - a. Please write down what you think their thesis statement is.
- 2. Please give one piece of constructive criticism that the writer can use to make this a more successful paragraph.

Paragraph Five:

Does the writer explain the topic's impact or significance in history?

Please give one piece of constructive criticism that the writer can use to make this a more successful paragraph.

Overall Structure:

Does the writer use correct paragraph structure, avoiding the use of the writing prompts as numbered questions or as headings?

Checklist: Writing the Process Paper

- ☐ I have reviewed the NHD Rule Book regarding the requirements for the Process Paper.
- ☐ I have reviewed examples of process papers.
 - Reviewed example projects for their process papers either on the CT History Day website or the NHD website.
- ☐ I have drafted and revised a good process paper for my project that explains:
 - How I chose my topic and how it fits this year's theme
 - How I conducted my research
 - How I created my project
 - Identified my thesis statement
 - How my topic is significant in history
- ☐ I have written my process paper in the format of an essay (paragraphs) and not as a list of questions and answers or as sections.
- ☐ I have received feedback on my process paper from at least one peer and one trusted adult.
- ☐ I have revised my process paper based on feedback I received.
- ☐ I have maintained the 500-word limit.
- ☐ If I am part of a group, we have collaborated on the writing of the process paper which reflects all of our experiences and have used *we/us/our* pronouns. (Group entries only require one process paper, not one per student)

What questions I have after completing this section?



Lesson Ten: Preparing for a History Day Contest Day

GOAL: Understand what to expect on a Connecticut History Day Contest Day

You've conducted your research and created a project that demonstrates your argument in an original and creative way...now what?

The following section details "Contest Day" as it has historically taken place – in person. Watch the CHD and NHD websites for further information.

Tasks/Activities:

1. Review your project category components and verify you have completed everything according to the category specific rules and evaluation form.
 - [NHD Rulebook](#)
 - [Category Checklists](#)
2. Review expectations and the schedule for Contest Day.
3. Practice for the interview with the judges.
4. Review and complete ***Preparing for a History Day Contest Day Checklist***.



What to Expect on a Contest Day

Students attending the CHD Regional Contests will have their projects judged by educators, history professionals, alumni, and volunteers as they share their projects about Rights & Responsibilities in History. At the end of the day, the students will know if they are heading to the State Contest in May.

Whether this is your first contest season or your last, there are always tips on how to get the most out of contest day. Regional Contests aren't just about presenting your project. This is your chance to meet new friends, experience new things, and interact with others who are passionate about history. Below you can find information and tips on what to expect on contest day and what you can do to get the most out of it.

What to Expect

When you arrive at your regional contest, there will be some parts that are the same for every student across the state. You'll check in for the contest and attend the Welcome Ceremony, you'll present your project, and you'll have the chance to view other student work. Each contest has a variety of other opportunities for students to take advantage of as well.

Contest Day is an exciting and generally long day! Students arrive for registration between 7:30 a.m. and 8:15 a.m. Students will meet with the judges between 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.; larger categories will have an additional run-off (finals) round between 12:30-2:00 p.m. The day concludes with the awards ceremony that usually ends around 3:30 p.m. While we understand this makes for a long day, we have to give the judges time to complete the evaluation forms.

What to Bring:

Depending on what your project is, you are expected to bring:

- Three copies of your process paper and annotated bibliography for Exhibits, Performances, and Documentaries.
- Even though you have already submitted your website or paper, you may want to bring an extra copy of your paperwork for your own reference.
- Your props, costumes, and script if you are presenting a Performance.
- A copy of your documentary on a thumb drive or laptop/tablet for Documentary students.
- You may want to bring extra materials-- like tape, scissors, etc.- to do any minor repairs on your exhibit.

Along with presenting your Exhibit, Performance, Documentary, Website or Paper, you also will go through an interview about your project. This is one of the things that students get most nervous about. Judges are excited to meet students and learn more about your research. Remember, you are not judged on your interview. Try to relax and enjoy sharing about your work!

At each contest, students can:

- Purchase a *Connecticut History Day* souvenir (t-shirt, hat, etc.)
- Attend a living history or musical performance
- Sit in on other students' presentations of their projects

Some contests may have other opportunities available for students as well such as:

- Campus Tours at University of Connecticut (Mansfield Contest), Southern Connecticut State University (New Haven Contest), Sacred Heart University (Fairfield Contest), Central Connecticut State University (State Contest)
- Food Trucks, Dining Hall access, and food for sale
- Movie Screenings
- Performances by living history performers or musical groups
- Playing board games

Finals (Run-Off) Rounds

In some instances, a category may have so many participants that there need to be two rounds of judging. In these cases, judges select up to two entries from each group. The entries selected continue to a second "run-off" round. Students in the paper, exhibit, and website categories do not need to be present for the Run-Off Round. Performance and documentary students *MUST* be present for the Run-Off Round but there will be no interviews; an announcement of the students continuing to the second round of judging for these categories will be made around lunchtime.

Participants do not need to stay the entire day and are not required to attend the Awards Ceremony. Please make sure to check if you are in a run-off category. Leaving early (performance, documentary) or removing your exhibit early may remove your work from consideration for a prize.

Tips for Making the Most of Your Contest

There is a lot to do on a contest day. There can also be a lot of down time between when you arrive, present your project, and the closing ceremony. To make the most of your day, make sure to take advantage of the opportunities listed above and consider the tips listed below.

On contest day, consider bringing the following with you:

- Lunch and/or snacks
- Cash, most contests have food or snacks available for purchase. Many have restaurants nearby.
- Cash to purchase a *Connecticut History Day* souvenir (t-shirt, hat, etc.)
- A book, homework, a game, or playing cards
- Your phone to take pictures throughout the day. Make sure to share them on social media by using the hashtag **#CHD2025** and **#CTHistoryDay!**

During contest day, we recommend that you:

- Be an audience member and view other student projects
- Attend the fun events happening during your contest
- Attend the Awards Ceremony at the end of the day

Contest day is all about what you make of it. So have fun and enjoy your time at Connecticut History Day!



Your Interview with the Judges: Tips and Sample Questions

Your project will be evaluated by a team of judges consisting of volunteers who are historians, educators or have an interest in history. They will work as a team to evaluate your research, writing and creativity according to the criteria in the NHD category rubrics.

You will meet with the judges on contest day for a brief interview. The purpose of the interview is to allow you to introduce your project and for the judges to gain some perspective on your process. The interview is not factored into the overall ranking of a project. Similarly, the judges cannot evaluate any information shared during an interview that is not present in the project.

General Suggestions:

- Be sure to introduce yourself. If you are part of a group, make sure each group member does so as well.
- Be confident, yet polite, in your responses. Remember YOU are the historian for this project.

Sample Questions: Judges are given sample questions to guide them but can ask other questions as well. These are some questions to help you practice and get an idea of what the interview experience is all about. You may notice that many of the questions reflect the information in your process paper, so think about how you responded on your project's process when writing that document.

1. What made you choose this topic? What made you choose this category?
2. What was your most important source, and why?
3. What was the most interesting thing you learned while researching?
4. As you did your research, what surprised you the most about this topic?
5. What did you find most difficult about doing the research for this entry?
6. How does your topic relate to the NHD theme?
7. How does your topic relate to what's going on locally or nationally at the time?
8. How did your primary sources help you understand this topic?
9. Were you able to visit any historical organizations or locations to conduct research?
10. Briefly describe how you created your exhibit/documentary/website/performance?
11. What were the most important consequences of your topic?
12. Why is this topic significant in history?
13. How did you divide the work among group members?
14. I noticed you selected ___ video clip/photo to include in your project. Tell us how you found it and why you chose to include it.
15. Is there anything you weren't asked that you would like to talk about?

Checklist: Preparing for an In-Person History Day Contest Day

- ☐ I have reviewed all the components of my project and checked the category checklist.
- ☐ I have a completed Annotated Bibliography.
- ☐ I have a completed Process Paper.
- ☐ I have assembled my required written materials (Annotated Bibliography and Process Paper) with the correct title page information.
- ☐ If I am competing in the exhibit, documentary, or performance category I have made THREE copies of my required written materials and stapled in the top left corner. (NO BINDERS OR REPORT COVERS)
- ☐ If I am competing in the website category, I have saved my written materials as PDF files and integrated them into my website.
- ☐ If I am competing in the paper or website category, I have made ONE copy of my written materials to bring to the contest to help me during my interview.
- ☐ I have practiced the questions for my interview with the judges.
- ☐ I have reviewed the contest day expectations.
- ☐ I have my completed project ready to take to the contest.

What questions I have after completing this section?