FOR STUDENTS: A great National History Day topic starts with a research question. Evaluate your history day topic and your research question by considering the boxes below. If you cannot explain why your question/topic meets each part of the criteria, you may want to consider revising your question/topic. Good luck!

Is it History?

Does the topic study change and continuity over time and explore cause and effect? Did it happen at least 20 years ago?

Sources?

Can you find **plenty** of primary and secondary sources for it? Keep in mind that your primary sources need to be diverse. (You can't just use historic photographs). You also want to be sure to check libraries, archives, and museums for sources. *Don't rely just on the internet*!

National History Day Theme

Does it connect to the National History Day Theme? The theme must be fully integrated into your project!

Historical Question & topic

Any history research project begins with a historical question. What do you want to ask of your topic? What is it you want to learn?

Is it significant?

Does your historical question ask how your topic impacts society socially, politically, and economically? Does your topic have longterm historical consequences? Does your topic matter to history?

Historical Context?

Can you place your topic in historical context? Can you talk about what else was happening in the community, state, nation, and/or world in which your topic was taking place?

It Demands Interpretation

Can you interpret this topic? You don't want to just present facts, you should also analyze your topic and come up with your own conclusions. How and why did your topic happen? Who was involved? What was the impact or significance of your topic? What are the historical consequences? Why does it matter to us today?

Do you care?

You'll spend months researching and constructing your NHD topic so it should be a topic that matters to you!

Adapted for Tennessee History Day, 2013-2018 from materials provided by the Chicago Metro History Education Center.

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