# National History Day

Bringing History to Life!

# What is National History Day?

National History Day is a creative, competitive and fun way to share your knowledge and love of history with the world. Each year over 600,000 middle and high school students from around the country and around the world participate in National History Day. Students work as individuals or in teams to create a project that showcases what they have learned about their historical topic.

# What type of project can I create?

Students can choose to create a project in one of five categories:

- Exhibit

- Documentary

- Performance

- Website

- Paper

Each type of project can be completed by groups or individuals except the paper category which is only for individuals.

# Exhibit

- An exhibit uses photographs, maps, drawings and captions to tell the story of your research. You will create a physical display similar to those you have seen at museums and other historic sites

# Documentary

- Documentaries present your historical research through a ten minute presentation that uses images and video footage related to your topic. Documentaries require students to have access to various forms of technology.

# Performance

- A performance is a live, dramatic presentation of your historical research.
- Students use their historical research as the basis for the script they write as well as ideas for costumes and props.

# Website

- Websites present your historical research as a series of webpages. Students use images, media and text to describe, analyze and interpret their topic.

- All NHD websites are built using the Weebly editor available from nhd.org

# Paper

- Historical papers present your research through writing.

- You may include some images, such as a map or photograph, but your words must tell the story

- This category is only open to individuals.

# How do I create a project?

NHD projects begin with three steps:

- Understanding the year's theme

- Selecting a topic

- Research

# Contest Theme

- Each year NHD has a different theme that guides the creation of student projects.

- NHD provides students with a theme sheet each year to help them better understand the meaning of the theme

2016 Contest Theme
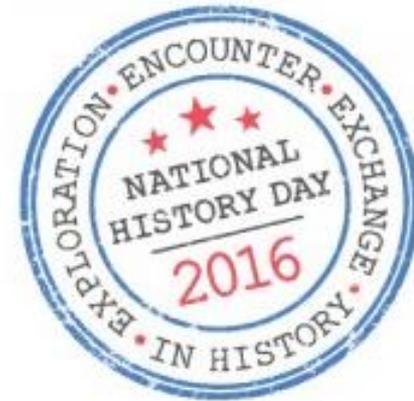
# Topic Selection

- NHD publishes a list of possible topics each year. However, students are also encouraged to select state or local history topics.

- You should select a topic that relates to the year's theme and then articulate that relationship to the judges throughout your project.

## Sample Topics List

- New Spain and the Comanche: Encounters, Missions, and Conquests
- The Spark that Ignited a Flame: China's Explosion into Gunpowder
- Roger Williams: The Exploration to Establish Rhode Island and Provide Religious Tolerance
- Mansa Musa: Exploring Africa
- Encounter and Exchange of Religious Ideas between Puritans and Native Americans in New England
- Jesuit Missionary Matteo Ricci: Italy and China Exchange Philosophy and Astronomy
- Catherine the Great's Encounters with Voltaire and the Enlightenment
- Commodore Matthew Perry and Exchange with Japan
- The Exchange of Disease: Encounters between Europeans and Native Americans in the Colonial Era
- Catherine of Siena and Gregory XI: The Exchange that Returned the Church to Rome

- Diplomatic Encounter: The SALT Talks
- Exchange between France and the United States: The Louisiana Purchase
- Exploring African-American Culture: The Harlem Renaissance
- Intimate Exchange: Abigail and John Adams
- Expanding the Boundaries of Dance: Martha Graham
- Rosalind Franklin: Exploring the Human Genome, Encountering Prejudice
- Exploring New Technologies: Andrew Carnegie's Steel Empire
- Exploring America: Immigration
- Nelson Mandela's Encounters with Apartheid
- Exploring an Empire: Hammurabi's Expansion of Mesopotamia
- Patterns of Exploration and Encounter: French Jesuits in Canada

# Research

- NHD projects combine primary and secondary source research to effectively tell the story of your topic.
- Don't be afraid to revise your topic once you begin the research process. You may find that the sources lead you in directions you have not considered before.

<span style="color:red">Sources to Consider</span>

- Books by historians or other reputable authors
- Reputable websites such as Library of Congress
- State and local archival collections
- Interviews with participants or historians
- Visits to museums or historic sites

# Bibliography

- NHD requires that you create an annotated bibliographic entry for every primary and secondary source that you use in your project.

- NHD requires students to use either MLA or Turabian format.

- NHD offers free access to Noodle Tools for creating your bibliography

Bibliography Tips

- Make an entry for every source you use as you conduct your research. It is much easier to delete entries than to go back and try to recreate them

- Find a style guide and use it consistently.

- If you use an online bibliography program, check the accuracy of your entries against the style guide

# Thesis

- Once you have begun your research you will be able to draft a thesis statement.

- The thesis should explain the topic's relationships to the theme as well as the conclusion you arrive at based on your research.

- Remember to revise your thesis as your understanding of the topic expands through additional research.

**Sample Thesis:**
**While many Tennesseans believed in the universal right to freedom, certain Tennesseans also took responsibility assisting slaves on the Underground Railroad.**

# Historical Context

- As you research, take note of individuals, groups, events or ideas that set the stage for the topic you are exploring.

- Your project should clearly explain how your topic relates to these people and events.

**Historical Context**

People

Ideas

Events
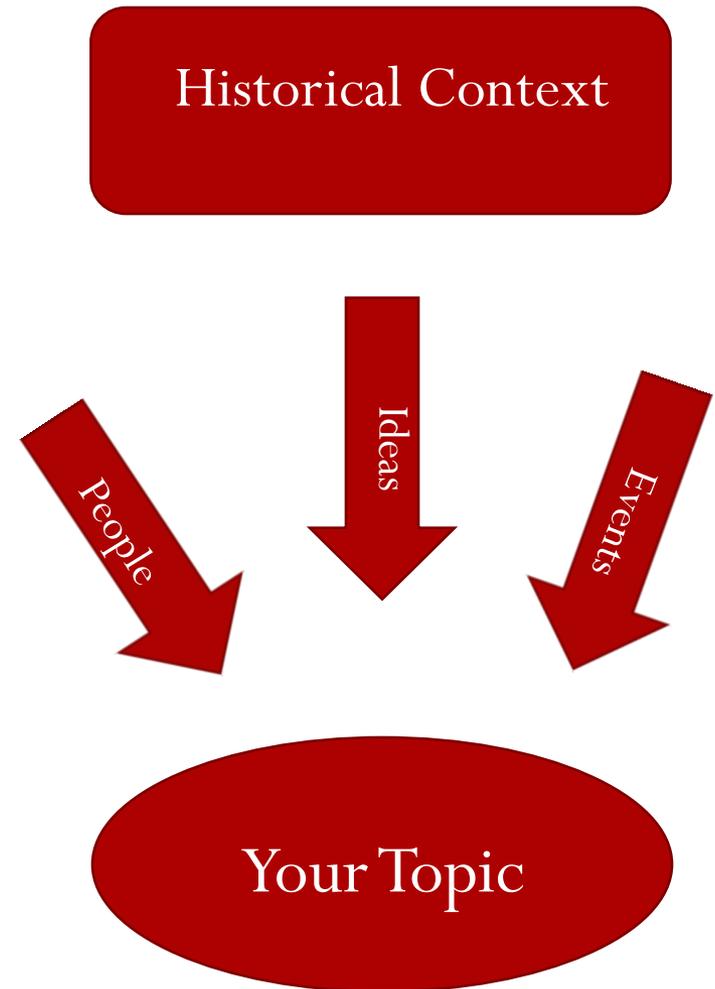
Your Topic

# Impact

- Your project should explain the historical impact and continuing legacy of your topic.

Your Topic

Impact

Today
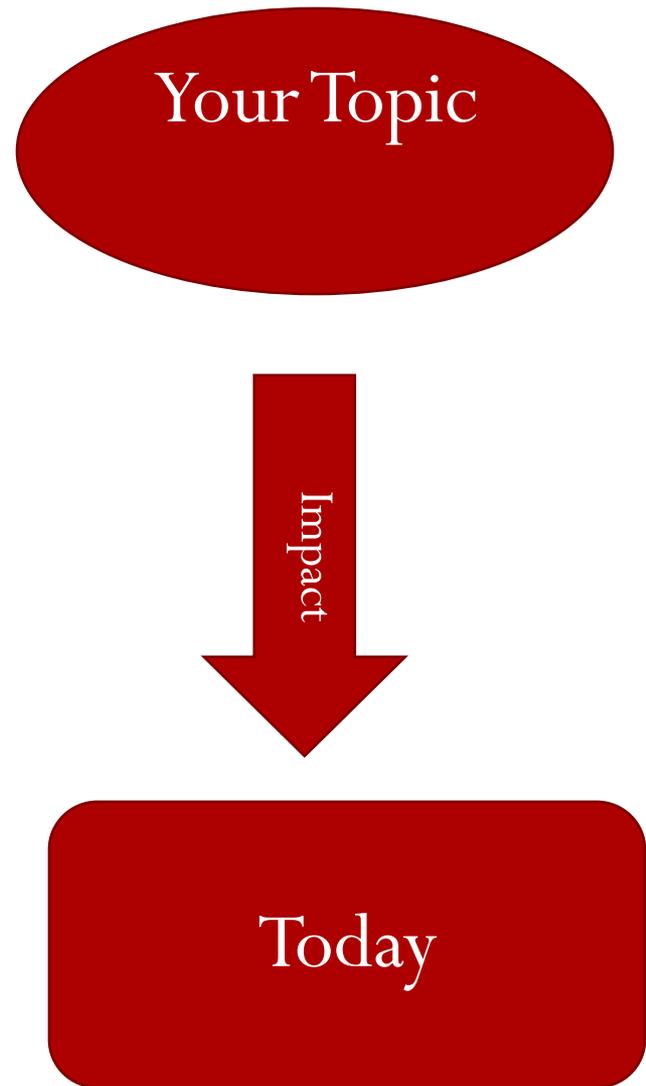
# Why Should I Participate?

You should participate in NHD to:

- Develop skills

- Have an opportunity to win prizes and scholarships

- Have fun!

# Develop skills

- Every NHD student develops his or her research, writing and time management skills by completing a project.
- Every student completes an interview with the judges which builds interviewing skills.

# Opportunities for prizes and scholarships

- Prizes are often available to winning participants at the local, state and national level.

- College scholarships are also available to students competing in the Senior division.

# Fun!

- Competing in NHD will give you the opportunity to meet new people from your community and from around the world who share your love of history.