

Change is at the heart of this year’s theme. People have worked for change in all parts of their lives throughout all of history. This means you can pick a topic from your own community, or from anywhere across the world. You might choose to research a successful change, a failure to change something, or a topic that has a mixture of both. Your job is to identify the change people were working for in *your* topic.

- What did they want to change?
- Who was working for or against that change? Why?
- What was different because of their fight for change?

What’s the Difference Between Revolution and Reform?

Revolution and reform both happen when people want change. The differences between these ideas will impact how you connect your topic to the theme. Your topic might have both revolution and reform - or might just have one.

NHD Definition	Explanation
Reform: The effort to change to a better state or form; to improve by alteration, substitution, abolition.	Reform happens when people work to change something for the better without completely getting rid of it. <i>Reform is like fixing your car. You keep the same car, but you make it better by getting new tires.</i>
Revolution: The forcible overthrow of a government or social order, in favor of a new system; a dramatic and wide-reaching change in the way something works or is organized or in people’s ideas about it.	Revolution is when people want major change. They want to do things in an entirely new way, or completely change the way people think about something. <i>Revolution is like buying a new car instead of fixing the old one, or inventing a whole new kind of transportation.</i>

What about Reaction?

Reaction is how someone or something responds to something else that happens. All topics should connect to reaction. This could be the “spark” for your topic – people react by trying to change things. Reaction could be the impact of your topic - how people responded to or changed things because of your topic. Reaction is more than just *thoughts or feelings* about something; what did people *do* in response?

Types of Revolution

One definition of revolution is the overthrow of a country’s government, but revolution doesn’t always mean war. Revolution can also describe change in the way people lived, worked, or what they believed. For example, the Industrial Revolution was a major change from doing things by hand to using machines. It was a revolution in technology, work, and daily life, but didn’t involve overthrowing a government.

- **Why was it a revolution?** You’re going to need to do more than say something was a revolution or revolutionary. You will need to provide the historical context to explain why this was a *major change* from how things were before.

Where to Start

The ideas in the theme can happen in any order. It depends on your topic. Does revolution have to come first? Not always! Do you need to connect to all three theme words? If the connection is there, you should put it in your project. Not all topics will connect to all three words, but should connect to at least two. We suggest starting with revolution or reform as the “heart” of your topic.

- **Start with Revolution:** If your topic is a revolution, you should look for the reaction (how people responded), then the reform (what changed because of it). You will probably find connections to all three theme words.
- **Start with Reform:** If your topic is a reform, you should next look for reaction, but you may or may not find revolution.

Set the Limits of Your Project

The cycle of change and response is constant. Something happens, and people react. Then something else happens, and people react to that. In addition to having a specific, narrow topic, you will need to use your thesis to define exactly what part of the story you’re focusing on.