

Topic Selection & Theme 2020-2021

Dear Parent or Guardian –

Each year, National History Day has a theme. Students must connect their topics to the theme. The theme is always broad. Students can research any topic from local, state, or world history. The 2021 History Day theme is “**Communication in History: The Key to Understanding.**”

Students may initially think about the physical tools or technology we have used to communicate, such as the Pony Express or the invention of the telephone. Remember that communication has happened in many different ways, such as speeches, art, fashion, or protests. Communication has always been a key part of history.

Tips for Picking a Topic

- **Interest:** Students should pick a topic that interests them. They will be working on their History Day project for several months.
- **Specific:** Students can only use a limited amount of words or time in a project. A specific topic will be easier for students to research and present. For example: The Civil War is too big for a topic. However, the Battle at Antietam is a more specific topic within the Civil War.
- **Connect to the Theme:** Students must connect their topic to the theme.
- **Historical:** Students should pick a topic that took place in history. They should not pick a current event. Students will need to figure out the importance of a topic. If the topic is too recent, it will be hard to do this. In general, we encourage students to look for topics that occurred at least 20 years ago.
- **Available Research:** Students will need to look for information from different sources for their project. Topics that took place in ancient history, or with sources in other languages, may be harder to research.
- **Okay with Teacher:** Some schools have extra rules for topic selection. Talk to your teacher for more information.

Parent or Guardian’s Role

Parents and guardians are an important part of the topic selection process. How can you help?

- **Talk about** the annual theme
- **Brainstorm** topic ideas
- **Help** students to select a topic that interests them

Thank you for supporting your student as they create a History Day project! You can learn more about History Day on our website, www.mnhs.org/historyday



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