345 Kellogg Blvd W.
St. Paul, MN 55102-1906

Dear Parent or Guardian –

Your student is becoming an historian through History Day! They will figure out why their topic is important in history. They will develop a thesis statement to share this idea.

A **thesis** is a student's main thought that holds the project together. It is a brief summary of the student's ideas on why their topic is important in history. A thesis is also the roadmap for their History Day project. Students will use their thesis to figure out what information they need to include in the project. A strong thesis should have these four characteristics.

- **Significance**: A thesis should explain how the topic changed history.
- **Go beyond just stating a fact**: The student will explain why they think the topic is important in history.
- **Specific**: Students need to describe the impact of a specific person, idea or event. It's hard to prove a thesis that is too broad. For example: *"Martin Luther King, Jr. changed everyone's lives forever"* is not specific enough.
- **Connect to the annual theme**: Your student will study the theme and explain the connection to their topic. You can learn more about the theme at www.mnhs.org/historyday/theme-and-topics.

A Parent/Guardian's Role

Thesis statements are one of the hardest parts of a History Day project. This may be the first time your student has written an historical argument. How can you help?

- **Be a good listener.** It's often easier to explain ideas out loud, rather than writing it down. Listen to your student. Help them to sort through their ideas and then make sure they write them down.
- **Encourage them to revise.** Students will revise and rewrite many times. Remind them that their hard work will pay off!
- **Stay positive!** Thesis writing can be challenging. Revision and problem solving are skills that students will need later in school, college, or careers.

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

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