

Many topics could be considered - and have been described by historians as - a frontier in history. It's up to you to make the case for your topic by identifying or defining the frontier and thinking about what came before and after it. The word frontier has many meanings, but historians have used the term in two broad ways:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A geographical boundary. 	<p>The Lewis and Clark Expedition was about what happened when geographical boundaries were crossed.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The limit of something, especially the limit of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what is known about a particular subject, • possible in terms of achievement, or • what is accepted as status quo in society. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marie Curie's discovery of radium pushed the limit of scientific knowledge. • The Apollo-Soyuz, the first international space mission, relied on the cooperation of different countries to explore a new frontier, space. • The non-violent protests of the Greensboro Sit-Ins pushed against the boundaries of segregation in the American south.

Some topics about geographic boundaries need special attention.

Topics about frontiers that may have been on the edge of European settlement likely involve Indigenous people and groups who already inhabited the space.

In American history, the word "frontier" has famously been linked to the myth of the American West, the belief that the physical space at the edge of western settlement was uninhabited wilderness. Frontier is a problematic term in this context as it erases Indigenous peoples who inhabited those lands from history.

However, this does not mean that you cannot choose a topic involving history that unfolded in the American West. You just need to proceed with caution and consider multiple perspectives. Ask yourself these three questions: how did all groups experience the situation, how did power dynamics play a role, and how were people affected differently.

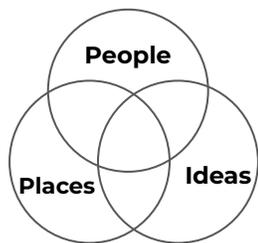
Have you considered different points of view?

Your research and project should consider a **variety of perspectives of those involved with or impacted by the topic**. An advancement or push on one side will meet resistance or pull on the other. While it is impossible to think about every individual person's point of view, find out more about those individuals or groups with different perspectives, and those who did and did not hold power or influence in the situation.

How did your topic change history?

For every History Day project, you need a historical argument, or **thesis**, that shows your topic's **impact in history**. The impact might be positive, negative, or a mixture of both. It might have local, national, or international effects. What happened in the short *and* long-term? Was the impact felt equally by all?

In order to do this, you should pick a topic that's **in history**. As a rule of thumb, topics where the majority of events took place **at least 20 years ago** are old enough to have both short and long-term impacts.



What about the second half of the theme?

While you must connect your topic to the idea of frontier, you do not have to discuss people, places, **AND** ideas in your project if there truly isn't a connection to all three. You should, however, consider each word carefully in building your theme connection. Most topics will connect to at least two of these concepts. To show the connection, try to use these words in your thesis statement, and support them with additional discussion in the project itself wherever it makes the most sense.