

Topic Selection

To understand the historical importance of their topics students need to ask questions about time, place and context; cause and effect; change over time; and impact and significance. Students must consider not only when and where events happened, but also why they occurred and what factors contributed to their development. Description of the topic must also include an analysis of information and conclusions about how the topic influenced and was influenced by people, ideas or events war.

The theme is a broad one, so topics should be carefully selected and developed in ways that best use student's talents and abilities. Whether a topic is a well-known event of world history or focuses on a little-known individual from a small community, students should be careful to place their topics into historical perspective, examine the significance of their topics in history, and show development over time. Studies should include an investigation into available primary and secondary research, an analysis of the materials, and a clear explanation of the relationship of the topic to the theme, Conflict & Compromise in History. Students should pay special attention to the possibilities of triumph and tragedy within the same subject. Then, students may develop papers, performances, documentaries, and exhibits for entry into National History Day competitions.

Stories of individuals in history are compelling but pose a challenge for a National History Day project. While working with a theme, students must move beyond biographies and description of specific people or events and demonstrate how that person's actions affected history.

The challenge for students engaged in a National History Day project with the theme of Conflict & Compromise in History is to capture that specific moment in time in which change occurred that changed the course of events and forever altered history.

Students should keep in mind that many excellent research topics can be found by investigating their own local history.

The general rule of thumb is don't choose a topic less than twenty-five years or until one generation has passed. Time gives historical perspective.