



WISCONSIN  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

## THE HISTORY DAY TOPIC TEST

Spend quality time deciding on a topic for National History Day. Choosing a topic is the single most important decision you will make as you complete your History Day project, so don't just settle on the first thing that pops into your head. Try exploring several possibilities before settling on one.

Once you think you have a topic selected, run it through the topic test below. Meeting the following criteria is important to selecting a good topic and will result in a more enjoyable National History Day project.

### **My topic is NARROW.**

Your topic is specific enough that you can examine it fully in the amount of research and presentation time you have. Choosing a narrow, manageable focus for your project will allow you to gain a more complete understanding of the historical topic you're addressing and become a true expert.

### **I am INTERESTED in my topic.**

A History Day project is a long-term project. Since you'll be working with your topics for a while, make sure it catches your interest and makes you want to learn more.

### **My topic is HISTORICAL.**

Very recent events generally don't make good historical research projects since we don't yet understand all the results of the event. In general, try to pick a topic that takes place more than 20 years in the past. About how many years ago did your topic take place? \_\_\_\_\_

### **My topic is SIGNIFICANT.**

Examine a historical topic that had an impact, whether on the local, national or global level. What came as a result of the topic you're exploring? What would have been different if it had never happened? How did a local occurrence reflect or influence events on a larger scale?

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### **My topic relates to the THEME.**

Make sure your topic relates to the theme in a fundamental way. How does your topic relate to the theme?

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### **There are primary and secondary RESOURCES available on my topic.**

Plan ahead and check to see what resources are out there about your topic. What resources are available?

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