

Choosing A Topic

Choosing a strong topic is key to a successful National History Day project. Ideally the topic should be unique, interesting to the student, and be fairly easy to research. The topic should keep in mind the theme for this year's competition: Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History.

More topics ideas can be found at

<http://www2.hcpss.org/pms/LMC/HistoryDay/2012sampletopics.pdf> or the Maryland Historical Society at www.mdhs.org/

TIPS FOR CHOOSING A TOPIC:

- Local history is often more unique than topics involving national figures and often allows more access to primary sources at local archives.
- National topics often allow for more readily available secondary sources and on-line information.
- International and ancient topics may allow for many secondary sources; however, primary sources in English will be very difficult to come by.
- A unique topic often captures a judge's attention.
- A topic that is too specific or too broad will be difficult to research. Topics that are too specific will make it difficult to find enough information, while too broad will overwhelm you with information.
- Put some of the key terms for your topic into an Internet search engine. Include the term "primary source" in the search. Do you get any hits?
- One primary source that sets apart a project is an interview. Is it possible for you to interview someone on this topic?