

WHAT TO INCLUDE:

DOCUMENTARY

NHD Documentaries are 10-minute original productions scripted based on student research. When creating a documentary make sure that:

- ▶ the audio is appropriate to the topic and easy to understand.
- ▶ the visuals are appropriate to the topic and support the narrative you're telling.
- ▶ your narration is free of grammatical errors and the recording is easy to hear.
- ▶ the volume of the audio is even, you don't want it to get suddenly too loud or too quiet.
- ▶ your analysis is clear and balanced between your own words and evidence you introduce. Make sure your point and your argument come across, not just the words of others.
- ▶ sources used in the documentary are credited at the end and in the annotated bibliography.

Things to consider when creating your documentary:

- ▶ you're telling a story, so have a beginning, middle, and end.
- ▶ make direct connections to the theme. Don't make the audience guess.
- ▶ include video and images to help tell your narrative and make the movie more dynamic.
- ▶ look for recorded speeches or oral histories to add a new voice. You can even try to conduct your own interviews.
- ▶ the tone of the documentary should match the tone of the topic.

Notes:

New York City History Day regional contest will be hybrid in 2026. The Documentary category will be judged in person on Sunday, March 1, 2026 at Brooklyn Public Library's Central Library at Grand Army Plaza. However, students must still register and submit written materials and a draft of their documentary online by 10 pm on Wednesday, February 4.

Further History Day rules and guidelines can be found online at nhd.org/en/contest/contest-rules/



PROJECT CHECKLIST: DOCUMENTARY

General Rules

- Topic clearly relates to annual theme.
- I/we independently researched and created this documentary.
- This is an original entry made for this year's contest.
- I/we have not used any improper assistance.
- I/we understand using someone else's work without proper credit is plagiarism and will result in disqualification.
- I/we did not use AI to help us create our project.
- Project includes a properly formatted title page.
- Process paper is no more than 500 words.
- Project includes a properly formatted annotated bibliography.

Documentary Rules

- My/our documentary is an original production with a script based on my/our research.
- Documentary is no more than 10 minutes.
- I/we created and produced the documentary project. I/we operated all equipment, including recording and editing software.
- I/we wrote and narrated this documentary. I/we have provided any narration, voice-overs, or dramatizations. The only voices or images on the documentary belonging to members of the group, the people we interviewed, or primary source audio/visual clips.
- This project contains no material created by non-participants specifically for this project.
- The documentary includes brief, readable, source credits for photographs, moving footage, interviews, music, and images used in the project. Sources credits are included within the 10-minute time limit. All sources used in the project are cited in the annotated bibliography.

HISTORICAL QUALITY - 80%					
	EXEMPLARY	PROFICIENT	DEVELOPING	NOVICE	NOT EVIDENT
HISTORICAL ARGUMENT (THESIS OR CLAIM)	<input type="checkbox"/> Historical argument is consistently supported by analysis and evidence.	<input type="checkbox"/> Historical argument is mostly supported by analysis and evidence.	<input type="checkbox"/> Historical argument is somewhat supported by analysis and evidence.	<input type="checkbox"/> Historical argument is supported by minimal analysis or evidence.	<input type="checkbox"/>
THEME	<input type="checkbox"/> Annual theme is consistently clear and connected to the topic in the project and argument.	<input type="checkbox"/> Annual theme is mostly clear and connected to the topic in the project and argument.	<input type="checkbox"/> Annual theme is somewhat clear and connected to the topic in the project and argument.	<input type="checkbox"/> Annual theme has minimal clarity and the connection to the topic in the project and argument is unclear.	<input type="checkbox"/>
WIDE RESEARCH	<input type="checkbox"/> Bibliography includes an extensive variety of types of available sources.	<input type="checkbox"/> Bibliography includes a sufficient variety of types of available sources.	<input type="checkbox"/> Bibliography includes a moderate variety of types of available sources.	<input type="checkbox"/> Bibliography includes a limited variety of types of available sources.	<input type="checkbox"/>
PRIMARY SOURCES	<input type="checkbox"/> Primary sources consistently support the historical argument.	<input type="checkbox"/> Primary sources mostly support the historical argument.	<input type="checkbox"/> Primary sources somewhat support the historical argument.	<input type="checkbox"/> Primary sources are present but do not necessarily support the historical argument.	<input type="checkbox"/>
HISTORICAL CONTEXT	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevant connections to the topic's time and place are consistently made and analyzed.	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevant connections to the topic's time and place are mostly made and analyzed.	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevant connections to the topic's time and place are somewhat made and analyzed.	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevant connections to the topic's time and place are limited.	<input type="checkbox"/>
MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES	<input type="checkbox"/> Varied perspectives are consistently included throughout the project.	<input type="checkbox"/> Varied perspectives are mostly included throughout the project.	<input type="checkbox"/> Varied perspectives are somewhat included throughout the project.	<input type="checkbox"/> Varied perspectives are included in a limited way.	<input type="checkbox"/>
HISTORICAL ACCURACY	<input type="checkbox"/> Historical information is consistently accurate, credible, and without critical omissions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Historical information is mostly accurate, credible, and without critical omissions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Historical information is somewhat accurate, credible, and without critical omissions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Historical information has limited accuracy, credibility, or critical omissions that impede understanding.	<input type="checkbox"/>
SIGNIFICANCE IN HISTORY	<input type="checkbox"/> The impact of the topic is consistently analyzed in the conclusion.	<input type="checkbox"/> The impact of the topic is mostly analyzed in the conclusion.	<input type="checkbox"/> The impact of the topic is somewhat analyzed in the conclusion.	<input type="checkbox"/> The impact of the topic is mentioned.	<input type="checkbox"/>

IMPORTANT REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Who must complete registration?

Teachers of competing students. Teachers must register prior to their students. More than one teacher per school can register, and up to two teachers can be listed as the advisor for each student. Registering will enable teachers to review student evaluations following the contest.

Competing students, accompanied by their parents or guardians. Students need the permission waivers signed by a parent or guardian to be fully registered. Each student in a group must register and be connected using the group project key for the entry to be evaluated.

Before you register, having the following information ready:

ALL REGISTRANTS: Phone number, mailing address, email.

STUDENTS ONLY: Parent/guardian name, email, phone number, teacher name and school, entry category, division, title of project (the title can be changed until the registration deadline), description of entry (description can be changed until the registration deadline)

When is registration?

Registration opens on January 5, 2026 for students and judges. Teacher pre-registration opens December 8, 2025. Registration closes and all projects must be submitted by February 4, 2026 at 10 pm. We highly recommend submitting by January 30 in case of technical issues.

Do I need to attend NYC History Day?

Students participating in Documentary, Exhibit, or Performance categories need to present their projects in-person on Sunday, March 1, 2026 at Brooklyn Public Library's Central Library at Grand Army Plaza. Teachers do not need to be present for their students to present. Paper and Website category projects will be judged remotely.

Why do you need parent/guardian information?

Parents/guardians must assist students in completing the account creation and registration process. This includes agreeing to several waivers and authorizations within the system. You must provide contact information for at least one parent/guardian during the registration process. Parents do not need to create their own account.

How do I register group projects?

If you're working on a group project, choose one person to register first. They'll create the entry and share the project key with everyone else. The project key will show up on the first student's registration confirmation screen and in their profile. Other group members use this key when creating their account—it links everyone together under the same project.

What email should I use?

We recommend using a personal email address as many school emails block outside messages. It is necessary for you to be able to receive email from Brooklyn Public Library and the zFairs registration system to compete in History Day. It is also vital that students provide their own email and provide an email for their parent/chaperone.

I can't log back into my account!

If you have trouble logging in and cannot reset your password, please contact nychd@bklynlibrary.org before creating a new profile.

TEACHER REGISTRATION

Creating a Teacher account:

Teachers must register before their students. Make sure you have a teacher advisor ready to support you.

STUDENT REGISTRATION

Creating a Student account:

1. Go to ny-nycrc.nhd.org
2. Select "Create Account" from the navigation menu at the top of the page to open a drop-down menu. Select, "student." You will be prompted to enter a username, full name, and email. You will continue to fill out your profile information by adding a password, parent/guardian name and information.
3. You will be prompted to select "Start a new entry" or "link to existing entry." If you are the first student in a group to register, or you are registering for an individual project you will select, "start a new entry." See below for more information about registering a group project.
4. Follow the registration steps to the "School" page and enter the information for your school, teacher, and grade. Your teacher must already be registered before you create your account.
5. On the "Entry" page you will enter the title, category, description of your project, and any relevant links. This information can be changed later if needed. You do not need to have your project completed by this step. If your project is a group project you will click "Will this be a Team Project" check box.
6. The final page of questions will be permissions that need to be gone over with your parent/guardian. Once you submit the permissions you will be registered. You can make changes to your project and registration by logging-in anytime before the February 4th registration deadline.

GROUP PROJECT REGISTRATION

If you are the first student to register a group project you will be given a project key and a group link. Write these down so that the other members in your group can link their accounts with yours.

If you are registering for a group project that has been started, you will follow the same instructions as above but select, “link to existing entry” at step three. Here you will enter the project key that the first student to register will have received.

Each student in a group project needs to create their own account and have their parent/guardian read over the permissions.

CATEGORY SUBMISSION

Project submission:

1. Go to the contest website and login to your student account. You will need the username and password you created when you registered. If you are participating as a group, only one group member needs to upload the project.
2. Click on your name on the top right—click **my profile**.
3. Upload your project files and/or paste your video/website link into the correct fields for your category.
4. Double check that your file and/or the link show up in the field
5. Click save at the bottom of the profile box.Documentary & Performance:

Documentary

1. In your registration profile, upload a single PDF with Written Materials. Your required written materials must be combined into a single PDF file with sections in the following order:
 - ▶ Title page
 - ▶ Process paper
 - ▶ Annotated bibliography
2. Upload an .mp4 video file of your documentary to google drive, one drive, or dropbox. You can also upload your video to YouTube or Vimeo, but make sure it is only viewable to those who have a link. It should not be public. Sometimes a school’s firewall prevents sharing with individuals outside your school. Test your link before submitting. If you need help sharing your video, email nychd@bklynlibrary.org BEFORE the contest deadline so we have enough time to assist you. This does not need to be the final version, just a draft.
3. Insert the link to your video to your registration profile.

UNDERSTANDING THIS YEAR'S CONTEST THEME

Each year National History Day (NHD) selects a theme to unite entries from all over the world. In accordance with the rubric, the annual theme should clearly and consistently connect to the project topic and argument. The theme should help guide your topic selection as they narrow down the scope of their research.

The theme for 2026 is “Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History.” This year you do not need to address all three parts of the theme. However, if the topic involves more than one, they should all be addressed. That said, it’s hard to imagine one without the other. A successful revolution leads to reform, just as a controversial reform often leads to revolution. In both cases society is reacting to ideas, actions, or events. A reaction by an individual or society can in turn cause a revolution or reform. NHD describes this as a domino effect, a “chain reaction of changing societies and governments.” Reaction is key to change; it connects revolution and reform. It would be wise to include at least two of the concepts in the project.

National History Day defines these three terms as follows:

Revolution: the forcible overthrow of a government or social order, in favor of a new system, or a dramatic and wide-reaching change in the way something works or is organized or in people’s ideas about it.

Reaction: an action performed or a feeling experienced in response to a situation or event; the resistance or opposition to a force or movement.

Reform: the effort to change to a better state or form; to improve by alteration, substitution, abolition. Often a reaction to an idea.

Because these terms offer such large and complex ideas and movements, it’s important for you to narrow down the focus of your NHD topic. This is a great year to focus locally, how has revolution and reaction impacted reform in your neighborhood, borough, or city? Revolutions can often be political, but also consider social history, economic history, art and culture, science, technology, and medicine. In what way did ordinary citizens shape a movement? How did they react, and why? What were the consequences? How have those with seemingly smaller voices made big impacts?

National History Day poses the following questions students should ask themselves as they work through their topic:

- ▶ What kind of ideas led to revolution?
- ▶ Who reacted to or was affected by a revolution or movement?
- ▶ Did the revolution result in reform? How and why, or why not?
- ▶ How can a revolution in one place influence reactions and reforms in another?

Adapted from the 2026 National History Day Theme Book and Video

WORKSHEET: CHOOSING A TOPIC—PART 1

Choosing a topic can be a very difficult task: how can you narrow down all of human history?! You will want to start with the History Day theme and narrow down your ideas to a specific topic you're passionate about. If you're not excited about your topic, your project may reflect that. Follow your passions from a big idea to a specific one.

REVOLUTION

REACTION

REFORM

What comes to mind when you think of: _____

What general historical topics are you interested in? _____

Choose one of the topics above, how is it connected to one of the theme terms (Revolution, Reaction, Reform)?

Your topic does NOT need to address ALL three, but if all three are present, you should be able to identify them.

What is your interest in the topic? Innovation, strategy, social impact, etc.? _____

Can you identify a single person, group, place, or event that are of particular interest? Can it be narrowed down? Is your topic about a specific moment in history? _____

What questions can you ask about your topic? Try and ask a HOW question. Can you include the theme key words REVOLUTION, REACTION or REFORM in your questions? _____

WORKSHEET:

CHOOSING A TOPIC—PART 2

Using the topic you choose in part I, consider the “so what” factor. An effective project not only describes the event/person/thing/development, but also analyzes and places it within a historical context. Are you able to make an argument showing the reader why your topic matters? Can you back up your argument with primary research? If your reader says, “Why this topic? So what?” will you have an answer?

Is your topic more than 20 years old? If it is not, you might want to choose a new topic. It can be difficult to have historical perspective and understand the consequence of something so recent. **Yes** **No**

Choose a specific time span or time period. If your time span is very long it will be difficult to research. Try narrowing it down to no more than 10 years. _____

Identify an event, action, or choice. Be specific! _____

What is the geographic location? Your project should focus on a specific region. If you have too broad a topic, your research won't be as in-depth. _____

Re-write your topic considering the narrowed focus you've detailed above: _____

How are people affected by your topic? Legally, politically, economically, culturally, socially?

What is the cause and effect of your topic? What led up to the event your topic explores and what happened after? What was the impact or change? _____

Give three reasons why the topic is significant to history. It can be important locally, at a state or national, or international level. _____

WORKSHEET: RESEARCH BRAINSTORM

Before you settle on a research question you need to collect some initial research. This should be fairly broad to make sure you've chosen a topic that will lend itself to an interesting project with ample resources. You may have already done some of this while deciding on a topic. Start by thinking of keywords. A keyword is a term specific to your topic, you may have hit on some of these in the choosing a topic section : think about who, what, when and where.

List at least five keywords for your research topic:

Start your search on Google or an archival database. If your keyword is a phrase, remember to put it in quotation marks so you're searching for the entire phrase and not each individual word.

Find at least one primary source related to your topic. As you find information, be sure to write down the bibliographical information so you're ready to write your annotated bibliography.

Title: _____

Author: _____

Date published: _____ Publisher: _____

Date accessed (website): _____

URL (if applicable): _____

What questions do you have after looking at the primary source? _____

What information have you learned from the primary source? _____

Are there new keywords you want to look into? Remember, this is not the last time you will be doing re-search. You're just getting started _____

WORKSHEET:
UNDERSTANDING PRIMARY SOURCES

Source name: _____

Describe this source: _____

What type of original document is it? Check all that apply

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper | <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Transcription | <input type="checkbox"/> Handwritten |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Government Report | <input type="checkbox"/> Diary | <input type="checkbox"/> Audio |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Document | <input type="checkbox"/> Letter | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Atlas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Certificate | <input type="checkbox"/> Photograph | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (explain below): |

When was the source created? _____

Who created the source? _____

What locations does the source mention? (where it was made, where it references, etc.) _____

Summarize what you already know about who created the source: _____

Summarize what you already know about the time period: _____

Who was the original intended audience? _____

List 3 key words or phrases that you think are most important in the source:

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____

What is the purpose of the source? Give 2 pieces of evidence to support your opinion

Purpose: _____

Evidence 1: _____

Evidence 2: _____

2 Pieces of evidence that tell you something new about your topic:

Evidence 1: _____

Evidence 2: _____

Does the source agree with your assumptions and opinions about your topic? Why or why not? Use evidence.

What questions do you still have? _____

SOURCES FOR RESEARCH

Research projects include information from many different sources. Explore the list of primary and secondary sources, and think about the types of sources that could help you answer your research question. History Day projects are required to include both primary and secondary sources.

A primary source is:

A document from the time your topic took place

- ▶ personal correspondence and diaries
- ▶ works of art and literature (sometimes)
- ▶ speeches and oral histories
- ▶ audio and video recordings
- ▶ photographs
- ▶ advertisements
- ▶ laws and legislative hearings
- ▶ census or demographic records
- ▶ plant and animal specimens
- ▶ ephemera, (tickets, invitations, menus,

A secondary source is:

A source that provides interpretation, commentary, or analysis, a second-hand account and often based on primary sources

- ▶ textbooks
- ▶ dictionaries
- ▶ encyclopedias
- ▶ biographies
- ▶ topic expert, such as a historian or professor

Both a primary and secondary source:

Some sources can be both depending upon who created the source when.

▶ **Newspaper/magazine/journal article...**

PRIMARY SOURCE: contemporary news events, first-hand account
SECONDARY SOURCE: milestone commemorations, historical overviews, a second-hand account

▶ **Documentary film...**

PRIMARY SOURCE: footage from the time, interview from someone who experienced the topic first-hand
SECONDARY SOURCE: topic expert or second-hand source interview

▶ **Nonfiction text...**

PRIMARY SOURCE: original research, historical findings or information
SECONDARY SOURCE: commentary or analysis about a topic the author didn't experience first

FREE RESOURCES FOR PRIMARY SOURCE RESEARCH

LIBRARIES AND PUBLIC ARCHIVES

The Three Library Systems of New York City:

- ▶ Brooklyn Public Library: bklynlibrary.org
- ▶ Queens Public Library: queenslibrary.org
- ▶ New York Public Library: nypl.org

Anyone in NYC can get a free library card from any or all of the public libraries regardless of which borough you reside in. There are library branches throughout the city as well as digital resources that vary between the three systems. Additionally, NYPL has many research libraries, archives and centers covering various topics and special themes.

Center for Brooklyn History:

bklynlibrary.org/cbh/collections/collections-resources

The archival branch of the Brooklyn Public Library documents the history of Brooklyn. Resources include research guides which are a helpful place to start when looking for topics on Brooklyn. CBH is the host of New York City History Day.

Brooklyn Newsstand: bklyn.newspapers.com

A portal for online historic Brooklyn newspapers from the Center for Brooklyn History including *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, a daily newspaper published from 1841 to 1955.

Digital Public Library of America: dp.la

DPLA collaborates with libraries, archives, and museums around the country to compile free digital resources. DPLA has ways to search, browse by topic or look at primary source sets.

Library of Congress: loc.gov

The largest library in the world, LOC is the main research arm of the U.S. Congress and home of the U.S. Copyright Office.

National Archives: archives.gov

The National Archives and Records Administration holds all documents and materials created by the United States federal government.

New York State Archives: digitalcollections.archives.nysed.gov/

NYSA has over 270 million records from NY's colonial and state governments dating back to 1630. *Most States have an archive. Depending on your topic, this can be a great place to look for digitized primary sources.*

MUSEUMS

Museum of the City of New York Collections:

collections.mcny.org

MCNY has 750,000 objects in their collection with 190,000 available digitally.

New York Historical Society: *nyhistory.org*

New York's first museum strives to tell the stories of New York and America.

Many museums have some of their collections digitally available for free. Historical societies, natural history museums, historic houses, and art museums are great places to look for primary sources.

NEWSPAPER ARCHIVES

Chronicling America: *chroniclingamerica.loc.gov*

Search America's historic newspaper pages from 1777–1963.

Students who advance to the National contest and use Chronicling America will be eligible for a special prize funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Digitized Harper's Weekly: *harpweek.com*

An influential newspaper running from 1857–1916

This is a non-exhaustive list of free research resources.

*Universities and cultural institutions will often have archives, and many have digital resources — but sometimes their collections are available by appointment only. If you would like help contacting these institutions feel free to reach out to **nychd@bklynlibrary.org** and we can help you make research appointments.*

QUESTIONING

When you do research, it's important to keep asking questions to help guide your search. The basic questions are: **who**, **what**, **where**, **why** and **how**. Below are some example questions that might be helpful in thinking through the full scope of your project.

- Who**
- ▶ was impacted? Was the impact positive or negative?
 - ▶ made decisions? Who was a bystander?
 - ▶ is telling the story? Whose perspective do we have information on?
 - ▶ is left out of the story? Whose voice do we not hear from?
 - ▶ were the critics at the time? Are there critics today?
-

- What**
- ▶ are the causes and consequences of this event/person/place/time?
 - ▶ was life like during this time? What were the conditions? Were they the same for everyone?
 - ▶ were the obstacles faced?
 - ▶ is another perspective on this topic? Could someone else come to different conclusions?
 - ▶ is significant about this topic?
 - ▶ biases are evident in the research? Are they biases of the time (found in primary sources) or have they come about through later analysis (found in secondary sources)?
 - ▶ is left out of the narrative?
 - ▶ assumptions are made about this time/ place/event/person? What is the real story?
 - ▶ what terms do you need to define in the context of your topic?
 - ▶ are similar events to your topic either before or after?
-

- When**
- ▶ did the event take place/ the person live?
 - ▶ did the event become relevant or well-known?
 - ▶ did the events leading up to your topic occur?
-

- Where**
- ▶ did the event take place?
 - ▶ are your sources coming from? Are they reliable?
Is there a breadth of source types?
 - ▶ was the narrative of your topic developed?
 - ▶ did the responsibility come from?
-

-
- Why**
- ▶ is your topic important? Why is it important to you and why is it important to someone else? Why is it important in the scope of understanding history? Is the topic still relevant today?
 - ▶ is the topic described this way? Why do the sources you're using exist? Might there be sources you would like but can't find? Why might this be?
 - ▶ was the event allowed to happen?
 - ▶ do people have this right? Do they still have it today? Why or why not?
 - ▶ is there a need to re-examine this history?

-
- How**
- ▶ did the topic impact history at the time?
 - ▶ does the topic make an impact today?
 - ▶ did the topic affect different people/groups of people?
 - ▶ do we know about this topic today? Who were the record keepers? Who first re-discovered it?
 - ▶ can we learn from this?

WORKSHEET: RESEARCH QUESTION

Try writing out a question that is simple, specific, researchable, arguable, and relevant to the theme.
Think about using words like compare, impact, change, cause, effect, and influence.

Write out your question: _____

Does your question relate directly to the theme, “Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History?”

Yes No

Explain how: _____

Is your question arguable?

Yes No

List an alternative perspective: _____

Is your question:

Historical? (Related to something in history.)

Yes No

Not easily google-able? (You can't find the answer in one Google search or on Wikipedia.)

Yes No

Connected to the History Day theme?

Yes No

Arguable? (Someone could have another perspective.)

Yes No

Is a how or why question?

Yes No

If you answered “No” to any of these questions, go back and edit your research question.

WORKSHEET: WRITING YOUR THESIS STATEMENT

Method One: Filter down your arguments

Start with **three** strong pieces of evidence. What is your analysis of the evidence? What claims are you making based on your analysis? Pull the claims together and write out your main argument.

Evidence

What happened?

Analysis

How and why?

Claim

What does it mean?

Argument/thesis: Summary of claims—the “so what?”

Read through your thesis statement, can you identify the following: Highlight the topic. Underline the parameters of your research. [Bracket your argument.] *Star the significance*. Circle the relationship to theme.

Method Two: Research question → Thesis Statement

To craft your thesis statement, start with your research question. Turn your question into a statement. Make sure you address the topic, parameters of research, relationship to the theme, an argument, and the significance. Add in any missing information. Are you left with a thesis statement?

Write out your research question: _____

Turn the question into a statement: _____

Read through your thesis statement, can you identify the following: Highlight the topic. Underline the parameters of your research. [Bracket your argument.] *Star the significance*. Circle the relationship to theme.

Review your two thesis statements, does you prefer one over the other? Should they be combined? Select your draft thesis statement. Review again, what is being left out? Your thesis statement should touch on the who, what, when, where, and why of your topic while defining your perspective on the importance and impact. If you're missing any pieces, think about how to add them in.

Layout your context:

- ▶ Who is involved? Individuals? Groups?
- ▶ When did it happen?
- ▶ Where did it happen?
- ▶ Why did it happen? What was the direct lead-up?
- ▶ What social, cultural, political, or economic belief effected your topic?

Write out your new thesis statement: _____

WORKSHEET:

ORGANIZE YOUR RESEARCH

Regardless of the category you enter for National History Day—documentary, exhibit, paper, performance, or website—you need to pause and organize all of your research. Working through this research organizer will help you strategize the most important information to include in your project. The basic structure of any project will be: 1. an introduction that sets the scene, states the importance of the topic, lays out the thesis, and explains important background information; 2. claims that are supported with evidence, each supporting the thesis; and 3. the conclusion which re-states the thesis and explains the aftermath of the topic and why it is still important today. Do this step with your notes close at hand. You'll want to refer to them to include important evidence to support of your thesis.

Research Topic: _____

Research Question: _____

Thesis Statement: _____

Define the theme terms you're exploring (Revolution, Reaction, and/or Reform): _____

What background is needed to understand your topic: _____

You can have as many claims as you need to support your thesis. Due to word limits set by History Day, three to five is recommended. Each claim can have more than one piece of evidence as long as they are all connected.

Claim to support your thesis: _____

Evidence to support the claim (use bullet points for now): _____

How the evidence supports the claim and thesis: _____

Are there any counterclaims that can be made against your argument? If so, it's important to explain how you plan to acknowledge and refute them: _____

Your conclusion pulls all the pieces of the project together. While you want to re-state the importance of the topic and summarize your evidence you also want to leave the reader with a strong last impression. The conclusion is where you explain the aftermath of the topic and why it is still important today. You should go over new perspectives, changes and transformations, and any other effects or impact your topic may have had.

Restate your thesis statement in different words: _____

Summarize your main evidence: _____

Explain the Aftermath...

New Perspectives: _____

Change and transformation: _____

Effects and Impact: _____

CITATION

A citation is a note to let the audience know where you got your information from. Plagiarism is when you do not cite your sources and are stealing someone else's work and ideas. To avoid plagiarizing you need to give credit to the source of the information. You must cite direct quotes, but also ideas and information. It is also important to cite your work so that other researchers can look at the same sources you did and check to see if they agree with your opinions, or maybe find out more information that is interesting to them.

NHD allows MLA or Chicago style citation. We recommend MLA and have a MLA guide on the NYCHD website. You can choose either one, but be consistent!



You must also cite the sources quoted or directly referenced or paraphrase in your project. Image or videos also need to be cited next to their use. The NHD Bibliography guide will help understand how to cite sources depending on the category of project. bklynlib.org/annotated-bibliography



Note: MLA uses in-text or parenthetical citations, and Chicago uses footnotes. The NHD guide describes footnotes for use in a paper. If you choose to use MLA and want to use in text citation the standard is (Author Last Name – if it was not used in the paragraph, page number). Easy Bib has a helpful page describing different options for in-text citations: bklynlib.org/in-text-citations

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Every project will need to have an annotated bibliography as part of your required written materials. This will list every source you quoted, referenced, or used to guide your project.

ALL sources must be cited in the Annotated Bibliography. Each source should be accompanied by a two or three-sentence annotation explaining how you used the source and how the source helped you to understand the topic. Annotations should not include a description or any quotes.

For either style, the section will start with “Annotated Bibliography” centered at the top of the first page. DO NOT label this section as Bibliography, Works Cited, etc.

For NHD, the citations must be divided into TWO sections: primary sources and secondary sources. Within those two sections sources should be organized alphabetically. DO NOT sort sources any other way (for example, do not create sections for newspapers, photos, and interviews. All these sources should be included together likely under the “primary source” section.)

Words like “a,” “an,” or “the” (these are called *articles*) are not included when considering how to alphabetize a source. However, in MLA and Chicago, they are still included in the text.

Citations are formatted with a “Hanging indent.” This is the inverse of a usual paragraph with the first line of the paragraph lining up with the margin and all additional lines indented.

For MLA, the citation should begin all the way to the left of the page. Any additional lines of the citation should be indented 0.5 inches from the left margin. The annotation should start on a new line and the whole annotation should be indented 1 inch from the left margin.

To create a hanging indent in Microsoft word, highlight the text of the citation. Click the arrow in the bottom right of the *Paragraph* tab of the *Home* section to get to *Paragraph Settings*. Under the *Special* dropdown menu in the *Indentation* section select “Hanging” and set it to 0.5 inches (0.5”). You can also use the keyboard shortcut **Ctrl + T**. The annotation can be formatted by highlighting the text and going to *Paragraph Settings* and keeping *Special* as “none” and selection 1 inch (1.0”) for the left indentation.

Chicago will be cited similarly with the citation beginning all the way to the left of the page. Any additional lines of the citation should be indented 0.5 inches (0.5”) from the left margin. The annotation should be on a new line and also indented 0.5 inches (0.5”) from the left. When formatting the annotation, be sure to keep left indent at 0.5 inches (0.5”) and *Special* at “none.”

To create a Hanging Indent in Google Docs, you will want to make sure the ruler is visible (Click *View* and check *Show Ruler*). Select the citation or annotation. On the ruler drag the light blue triangle (left indent marker) to the right until it is half an inch from the margin. Move **ONLY** the light blue rectangle back to the left margin. You can also change the margins with the ruler in Microsoft Word.

Depending on the kind of source, the citation will look slightly different. However, a general rule of thumb you will want to have the following elements:

- ▶ Author
- ▶ Title of source
- ▶ Title of container (the website, encyclopedia, organization it came from, etc.)
- ▶ Publisher
- ▶ Publication date
- ▶ Publication location

WORKSHEET: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Source type: Primary Secondary

Title: _____

Author: _____

Publisher: _____ **Date published:** _____

Website: _____

Website accessed: _____

Source category: (this will help determine what additional information you need for the citation)

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Book | <input type="checkbox"/> Website | <input type="checkbox"/> Image |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper | <input type="checkbox"/> Journal | <input type="checkbox"/> Interview |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | | |

Write out your full source citation:

ANNOTATION

How did you use the source in your project? (one sentence) _____

How did the source help you understand you topic? (one sentence) _____

Your History Day annotations should not exceed three sentences.

They should not be used to provide more information on your topic.

PROCESS PAPER

Every NHD project must include a process paper. It can be no more than 500 words. The process paper cannot include quotes, images, or captions.

The process paper should be a description of the research and project development process. You should touch on how you chose and developed your topic and the steps you took to find sources and create your project. You should also use the process paper as an opportunity to explain the relationship between the topic and the annual theme, "Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History."

NHD suggests touching on the following questions in your process paper:

1. How did you choose your topic and how does it relate to the annual theme?
 2. How did you conduct your research?
 3. How did you create your project?
 4. What is your historical argument?
 5. In what ways is your topic significant in history?
-

MORE RESOURCES

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Please reach out if you have any questions related to teaching NHD, creating and submitting projects, or field trips to the Center for Brooklyn History to help NHD students understand primary source research. Sonya Ochshorn—New York City History Day Coordinator nychd@bklynlibrary.org

REGISTRATION:

Registration opens for Teachers on Monday, December 8, 2025. General registration for Teachers, Students, and Judges will open Monday, January 8, 2026. Registration closes at 10 PM on Wednesday, February 4, 2026.

WEBSITES:

New York City History Day: Information and guides to entering the NYC Regional History Day Contest bklynlib.org/history-day

New York City History Day Registration: Website to register Teachers, Students, and Judges for the contest. This is also the portal that projects must be submitted. ny-nycrc.nhd.org

National History Day: Information on National History Day and resources for Students and Teachers on creating an NHD project. 1st and 2nd place winners from the NY State affiliate contest move on to the national History Day contest held between June 14—June 18, 2026 at the University of Maryland in College Park, MD. nhd.org

New York State History Day: Information on the New York State History Day contest. 1st and 2nd place winners from the NYC regional contest move on to the NYS affiliate contest held on April 26, 2026 at SUNY Oneonta in Oneonta, NY. nyshistoryday.com

NHD Theme Guide:

Understand the 2026 theme, “Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History.” Find a theme overview video, information book, graphic organizer, and topic inspiration. nhd.org/theme

NHD Contest Rules and Evaluation:

Learn about History Day rules and evaluation criteria with the NHD rule book and category evaluation forms. New York City follows the same rules as laid out by the National Contest. nhd.org/contest-rules