



HISTORY DAY IN CALIFORNIA 2009-2010

INNOVATION IN HISTORY: IMPACT AND CHANGE

History Day in California invites students to research topics related to this year's theme **INNOVATION IN HISTORY: IMPACT AND CHANGE**. This broad theme will allow students to select and research an endless number of topics, from local to world history. Many of these topics easily align with the California Content Standards for History/Social Science.

While the most obvious topics come from science like new discoveries or new inventions, innovation is really much broader than that. Innovation suggests creative new approaches to any facet of life. Students might explore innovation in artistic, architectural, industrial, musical, or literature forms. Changes in political, social, or religious institutions or arrangements might also be considered innovations, as new ways to respond to problems facing society. Perhaps the innovation was built on other recent developments, with creative individuals taking advantage of opportunities rather than setting out to solve a problem.

While it is tempting to focus entirely on the specific innovation, students should keep in mind the impact and change, explore the "why?" and "so what?" of the topic. Why was the innovation important or significant, and what it left as its legacy?

Students should situate the topic in its **historical context** – what were the physical, political, economic, cultural and social circumstances of the events or ideas? Why did things happen as they did? Students must examine the **historical impact** of their topic – what has changed as a result? What effects did it have on the surrounding events and atmosphere of the time? Does it continue to have an effect today?

While the final decision of a topic is up to the student, we encourage students to consider topics related to California's Content Standards for History/Social Science. By selecting a topic

from the Content Standards, it will increase the availability and accessibility of secondary and primary sources. Identifying and examining primary sources is an important aspect of a successful History Day entry. These historical pieces of information provide direct evidence of the people, places, events, or ideas being studied. Primary sources are bountiful and include diaries and letters, newspaper reports, legal records, oral histories, and eyewitness accounts.

Regardless of which topic a student chooses, remember that it is the task of the participant to go beyond just describing history. Students are expected to gather information, analyze it, and develop their own conclusions as to its historical significance.

History Day in California participants should make sure that their **research is balanced** – what are the different perspectives about the topic? What varying resources are available about this topic? All students should ensure that their topic **adheres to this year's theme: INNOVATION IN HISTORY: IMPACT AND CHANGE**.

Finally, every person involved in History Day in California should remember that the greatest reward is in the experience and the knowledge gained by researching, analyzing, and preparing the entry.

HISTORY DAY IN CALIFORNIA 2010 STATE FINALS

May 6th to 9th in Pasadena

For more information contact:
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