

# 2012 Theme Activities: Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History



Revolution, reaction, reform. Can you think of three words that conjure up more active or engaging possibilities for topics? This year, National History Day asks students to view history through the eyes of others, research, and examine the causes and effects of topics based on the theme “*Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History.*” The theme is broad enough to include many facets of history, but specific enough to encourage student analysis. The theme helps students to understand their topic outside of its own narrative and encourages students to see how the topic connects to larger ideas, issues, and events in history. The theme asks students to think like historians and heighten the analysis in their projects.

- The word **revolution** means “the overthrow of one government and its replacement with another” or a “dramatic and wide-reaching change.” While students may first imagine topics related to political or military upheavals—like the American Revolution—they shouldn’t limit their choices. Successful NHD projects could examine revolutions occurring in many facets of life, including art, literature, social or cultural history, agriculture, technology, science, medicine, economics, etc. A revolution could include a literal, physical change or change in the way we think about or understand something.
- **Reaction:** Response. Reactions can be words, actions, or changes in way of thinking.
- **Reform:** To change. Remember: Not all reforms were positive for everyone involved. The impact of a topic may change over time. What long and short-term changes occurred as a result of this topic?

Since the ideas of revolution, reaction and reform work together, students should look for topics that encompass all three aspects of the theme. Students do not, however, need to address these equally in the project.

Students shouldn’t forget the last two words in the theme—**IN HISTORY**. They should look at topics that took place in the past, not current events. To create a good project, they need to look at the impact the topic had over time. In looking at current events, we don’t yet know the long-term impact. As a general rule of thumb, students should try to look for topics that took place at least 20 years ago.

## CONTENTS

The following activities and worksheets have been designed to help your students understand the 2012 NHD theme as well as evaluate the strength of potential topics.

- **Shortened Theme Sheet:** This shortened version of the theme sheet takes a closer look at the key words and ideas of the 2012 NHD theme. This activity can provide the foundation for future examination of the NHD theme by helping students to understand the words that make up the theme.
- **Topic Browse Worksheet:** This worksheet is designed to emphasize the breadth of possible NHD topics connected to this year’s theme. Use it to reinforce the ideas in the Theme Sampler PowerPoint.
- **Theme Sampler PowerPoint:** The purpose of the PowerPoint is to encourage students to see that there are great NHD topics in different areas of history. This PowerPoint is available on our website or on the 2012 Curriculum CD.
- **Topic Evaluation Worksheet:** Once students have selected a topic, this worksheet will help them to assess the topic’s fit with the annual theme. As they research and begin to put their projects together, this sheet will also reinforce the key ideas they may include in the project itself.

## QUESTIONS

Staff at the NHD in Wisconsin office at the Wisconsin Historical Society are happy to help. If you have questions or comments about any of our materials, please feel free to contact us. If your students have questions about the theme and possible NHD topics, they are welcome to contact us, too. We love to hear your questions and feedback!

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## 2012 Theme: Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History

The ideas of revolution, reaction, and reform are woven together in many possible NHD topics. Just because the word “revolution” appears first in the theme, doesn’t mean that students should only be looking for examples of revolution when searching for topics. Encourage students to brainstorm widely! The following examples show how students can think creatively about how topics connects to the annual theme.

Please note that not all three theme elements need to be equally addressed. Depending on the argument the student is making, one element of the theme may be discussed more or less than the others.

### **The Assembly Line and the Automobile**

<p><b>Revolution</b></p> <p>The assembly line was a revolution in manufacturing.</p>	<p><b>Reaction</b></p> <p>Take a closer look at how the automobile industry utilized this technology. How did management and workers react to this revolution differently?</p>	<p><b>Reform</b></p> <p>What long and short-term changes occurred because of the assembly line in this industry? How did it change profits, costs, and the experiences of workers?</p>
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### **Sterling Hall Bombing and the Anti-Vietnam War Movement**

<p><b>Reaction</b></p> <p>The bombing of Sterling Hall in Madison, Wisconsin was one example of a reaction to the Vietnam War and the anti-Vietnam War movement.</p>	<p><b>Revolution</b></p> <p>Take a closer look at the anti-war movement as a revolution in popular support for the war. Why did the movement develop?</p>	<p><b>Reform</b></p> <p>What impact did the Sterling Hall bombing have on the anti-war movement in Madison and in the United States? What long and short-term changes occurred because of this event?</p>
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### **Child Labor and the Industrial Revolution**

Even within the same topic, students will find different ways to connect to the annual theme. Each of these theme connections would result in different thesis and would change the information needed in the final project to support that thesis.

<p><b>Reform</b></p> <p>Advocates sought to increase awareness of child labor and the dangers associated with it and reform the issue through the passage of legislation restricting child labor and mandating education.</p>	<p><b>Reaction</b></p> <p>What were the various perspectives on this reform movement—politicians, business owners, reformers, families?</p>	<p><b>Revolution</b></p> <p>How did the passages of this legislation result in major changes in the workplace and lives of children? Consider changes in employment and compulsory education.</p>
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<p><b>Revolution</b></p> <p>The Industrial Revolution as a period during which significant changes in technology, agriculture, manufacturing, etc. resulted in major changes in how and where people lived and worked.</p>	<p><b>Reaction</b></p> <p>Child labor, including an increased demand for low-cost child workers, an increased need for the wages children could bring home to support their family, and increased dangers for children in the workplace.</p>	<p><b>Reform</b></p> <p>Advocates sought to increase awareness of child labor and the dangers associated with it and reform the issue through the passage of legislation restricting child labor and mandating education.</p>
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## National History Day 2012: “Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History”



The NHD theme helps you to ask questions and think about your topic. It helps you to see how your topic is connected to bigger ideas in history. This year, your topic has to be connected to the ideas of **revolution**, **reaction**, and **reform** in history.

The topic you pick for your project has to connect to these theme ideas. This theme connection must be shown in the project itself. The strongest theme connections this year will not only use the theme words, but will also show the connection between the topic, the theme, and the thesis.

### THE IDEAS BEHIND THE THEME

- The word **revolution** means “the overthrow of one government and its replacement with another” or a “dramatic and wide-reaching change.” This means that you should pick a topic related to a major **change** that has taken place in history. This could be connected to politics or military conflicts—like the American Revolution—but keep brainstorming. You can find examples of major changes in all areas of history. A revolution could be an actual physical change, or a change in the way we think about or understand something. For example, the invention of the printing press was a revolution in the availability of information. The development of the assembly line was a major change in manufacturing.
- **Reaction:** Response. Reactions can be words, actions, or changes in way of thinking.
- **Reform:** To change. Remember: Not all reforms were positive for everyone involved. The impact of a topic may change over time. What long and short-term changes occurred as a result of this topic?
- **Historical Context:** If we want to know why something was a revolution, reaction, or reform, we have to know what was going on beforehand. What was going on before the topic that may have influenced it? How was this topic different than what came before?

Be sure not to forget the last two words in the theme—**IN HISTORY**. You should select a topic that took place in the past, not current events. As a general rule of thumb, try to look for topics that took place at least 20 years ago.

### PICKING NARROW TOPICS

Many topics that you brainstorm—like the American Revolution or the invention of the automobile—are going to be too large for your National History Day project. You are going to need to narrow it down to a specific person, event, or idea connected to that bigger topic.

### REVIEW

1. True / False      My topic has to connect to the National History Day theme.
2. True / False      My theme connection should be a part of my project.
3. True / False      My topic should be something that happened in the past.
4. True / False      Once I select a general topic, I should think about ways to narrow it to a manageable size.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## National History Day 2012 Theme Sampler PowerPoint

Use this worksheet to follow along with the 2012 Theme Sampler PowerPoint.

1. **Theme:** What is the theme for this year?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. **Define** the following words:

<b>Revolution</b>	
<b>Reaction</b>	
<b>Reform</b>	

3. **Topic Brainstorm:** Name three areas of history that interest you and brainstorm two topics related to that area of history that connect to the annual theme.

<b>Area of History</b>	<i>Sample: Women's History</i>			
<b>Topic 1</b>	<i>Sample: Susan B. Anthony and the Suffrage Movement</i>			
<b>Topic 2</b>	<i>Sample: Title IX and equality for women in sports</i>			

4. What are two things you could do to find **more topics**?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## “Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History” Topic Worksheet

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Context</b>	<i>What took place before this topic to influence it?</i>
<b>Revolution</b>	
<b>Reaction</b>	
<b>Reform</b>	
<b>Significance</b>	<i>Why was this topic significant in history? What impact did it have?</i>