

## Unit 4: The Theme

### The Annual History Day Theme

Each year National History Day selects a theme. When participating in history day, students will need to choose a topic related to that theme. In fact, one of the important components of a history day project is the student's ability to **relate** their topic to the theme. The annual theme frames the research for both students and teachers. It is intentionally broad enough that students can select topics from any place (local, national, or world) and any time period in history. Once students choose their topics, they investigate historical context, historical significance, and the topic's relationship to the theme by researching in libraries, archives, and museums; through oral history interviews; and by visiting historical sites. Remember: History Day projects aren't just reports with dates and facts; they are studies of a topic's **significance** and **importance** in history.

### 2023: Frontiers in History

This year's theme, *Frontiers in History: People, Places, Ideas*, invites students to consider the complexities of social, political, economic, and intellectual interaction/engagement. As is always the case with History Day themes, this year's is broad and, as such, requires the student to consider first the terms themselves. At its most basic, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, "Frontier" (as a noun) is "the part of a country which fronts or faces another country; the marches; the border or extremity conterminous with that of another." Many students will automatically think of this theme in physical or geographic terms. Remember though that, as Merriam Webster points out, "Frontier" also means "the farthestmost limits of knowledge or achievement in a particular subject," as well as "a new field" to be developed. What these definitions do is open the term up to a wide variety of possibilities. Download the 2023 Theme book and theme narrative at the [NHDGeorgia website](#). While there check out the 2023 Theme video as well!

### Strategies for discussing the theme

1. Begin with definitions - Find out what the terms mean. Start with a dictionary. Discuss.
2. Work through the vocabulary found in the narrative (word mapping, vocabulary triangles, examples) - make certain students are comfortable with the vocabulary in the text itself.
3. When reading the theme narrative - highlight the different questions/points in the text.
4. Annotate the theme narrative, including questions students come up with as they read it.