

# 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.

## 2024: Turning Points in History

This year's theme, *Turning Points in History* 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. According to the "Turning Points" theme narrative from 2013, "the dictionary defines "turning point" as a point at which a decisive change takes place. So a turning point in history is more than just an important event that happened a long time ago. It is an idea, event, or action that directly, and sometimes indirectly, caused change. This change could be social or cultural, affecting a society's way of thinking or way of acting. It could be political, leading to new legislation or to a new government taking charge. It could be economic, affecting how goods are produced, bought and sold, or how much or how little a society has to spend on such items. A turning point can even cause all of these changes and more." You can download the 2024 Theme book and theme narrative at the [NHDGeorgia website](#). While there check out the [2024 Theme video](#) as well!

### Strategies for discussing the theme with your students

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.
5. Use the materials found in the Student Guide to support and assist your discussion.