Outline and Paragraphs for History Day

A History Day project contains, at minimum, five distinct sections that represent an organizational structure for your research. They are:

1) Historical Background and/or Context
2) Immediate Causes and/or Build-up
3) Main Event and/or “Heart”
4) Immediate and/or Short-Term Impacts
5) Legacy and/or Long-Term Impacts

One of the keys to a successful project is to avoid repeating information that has already been shared. This type of mistake is known as redundancy. Whether you decide after this class to create a research paper, website, documentary, exhibit, or performance, you are limited by time and/or words. Wasting either time or words on repetitive information means that you have less time or words to support your thesis.

For each section, here are some points to consider:

**Historical Background and/or Context**

- What was happening around the world BEFORE your topic/event/person took a stand?
- What do you need to explain to the reader in order for that person to be oriented to your topic?
- Why would this topic/person/event become important in this time period?

**Immediate Causes and/or Build-Up**

- How was your topic/person/event spurred to action?
- What was the spark that “lit the fire” for the main event to occur?
- What was happening immediately/directly surrounding your person/event/topic?

**Heart and/or Main Event**

- What happened?
- Who or what was the stand taken against or for?
- How did your topic/person/event take a stand?
- *It is critical to be direct in this section, avoiding impacts or reactions to the stand or action.*

**Immediate Impact and/or Short-Term Impact**

- How did people and/or governments react to this action or event?
- What changes occurred immediately after this event or action?
- Was additional action required in order to achieve the goal?
- Were other inspired to take action or join the actor as a result of the stand?

**Legacy and/or Long-Term Impact**

- How did people come to view the stand in the decades following it?
- What changes happened as a result of this stand?
- Who came to “carry the torch” after your topic/event/person was no longer able?
• Who was affected by the changes of the stand?
• Has, and if so, how, the action been mimicked by others since?
• Remember to think long-term in this section, focusing on global impact and separation by time.

Use these guiding questions to structure your outlining and writing. This list of questions is not exhaustive, that is, there ARE many more questions that you may choose to answer about your topic that are relevant to it. However, this is certainly a strong starting-point.

Happy researching!