



## Frontiers in History: People, Places, and Ideas

The 2023 National History Day theme asks students to consider how the exploration of unknown places or ideas resulted in changes that impacted or transformed society and culture.

As you choose your topic for this year, think about significant changes or new understanding that happened when people crossed geographical borders or discovered new knowledge.

### MAKE IT AN ACTION

Whether your topic is about crossing into a geographic frontier or an innovation of new ideas, the theme requires understanding the **actions of people**. Be sure you focus your research, connection to the theme, and analysis on what people did instead of who they were. What problems did they solve? What were their new ideas or understandings? Who gained an advantage and who was at a disadvantage?

### MAKE IT ABOUT PEOPLE

The movement across the frontiers of events and ideas impacts people differently. Your research should include these differences. Be sure to research the impact and change of your topic's frontier from **multiple perspectives**.

How did the movement of people impact those who occupied the frontier first? **Who had power and who was harmed** by the movement into a new frontier. Be careful to **avoid the stereotypes and myths about the American West** that are often portrayed in movies, novels, and children's games. Your work will include the responsibility to accurately analyze the roles people played in a geographic frontier, even if it is different from what you have read or heard about before.

How did a new innovation or discovery change lives of people? Did all people benefit in the same ways? Did the new knowledge **create a shift in power**? Did some people gain power while others did not?

### MAKE IT MATTER: Impact and Change

An event or innovation becomes a frontier when historians research the **impact and change** of the frontier and conclude that **significant shifts resulted** because of this frontier and that these shifts became the **building blocks for new frontiers** in the future. You will need to draw evidence-based conclusions about the significance of your topic. Are new frontiers linked to the people, ideas, and places of previous frontiers? Do existing frontiers open doors to new frontiers? By choosing a topic that is at least **20 years old**, you will be able to more easily see both the short and long-term impacts.

#### What is Known

Existing ideas, technology, culture, and understanding.



#### Motivation for Change

New ideas or knowledge; challenges or problems to solve.



#### New Frontier

Implementation of new ideas or innovations. How life or society changed.



### MAKE IT CONNECT

This year's theme, Frontiers in History: People, Places, Ideas, allows students to choose how to focus their research and analysis. *While you do not have to focus on people, places, and ideas, you should address the theme words that apply to your topic.*

Frame your research questions to first consider how frontiers are defined by the **ideas** and **actions of people**.

- What was known and unknown?
- What had to happen for new innovations to be implemented?
- How do you decide when a new frontier has been opened?