



# Turning Points in History

The 2024 National History Day theme asks students to consider how an idea, event, or action resulted in a historical shift that changed society and culture in significant ways.

As you choose your topic for this year, think about significant changes related to an event, idea, or action that shifted the course of local or national history.

## MAKE IT ABOUT CHOICE

A turning point in history can be about many things like a political change, a new law or court decision, a protest, an innovation, or a natural disaster. What's important is that it happens because someone or a group of people made a choice or did something that changed how things were in society and culture. Once a turning point happens, we can't go back to how things were before. It's like a big, important moment in history that leaves a lasting impact on everyone.

## MAKE IT ABOUT PERSPECTIVES

Turning points in history can affect people in different ways. When you do research and analyze a turning point, you should look at how it impacted different groups of people. Did everyone experience the same effects? Some people might have benefited, while others might have felt hurt by the turning point.

Historians play an important role in deciding which events are turning points. As time goes on, we learn more about these events, and it helps us understand them better. When we look at the turning point from different perspectives and study historical documents, we can see how it affected all members of society.

The turning point can change people's lives in various ways. Not everyone benefits in the same way. Sometimes, the turning point can shift the balance of power. This means that some people might gain more power, while others may not gain as much or even lose power. Understanding these different impacts helps us see the full picture of how the turning point changed society.

## MAKE IT ABOUT CHANGE

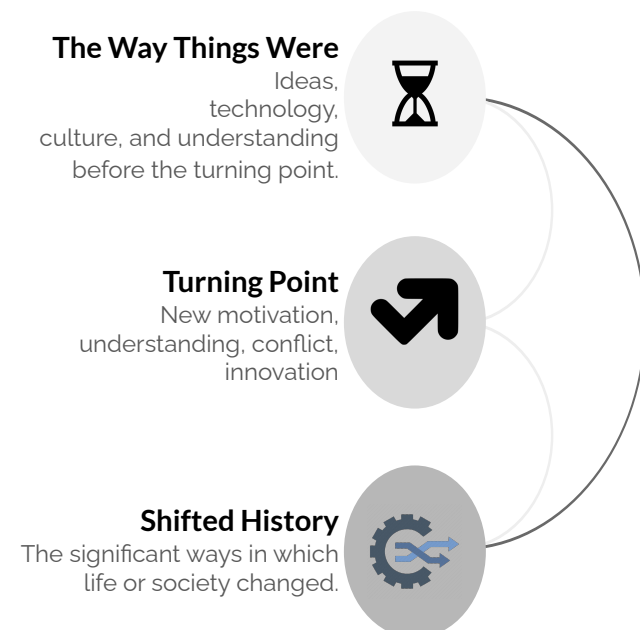
A turning point in history is when something really important happens that changes the direction of history for the people who were part of it. It becomes a turning point when historians study the event and see that it caused significant shifts or changes in society. This means that things were different in a big way compared to before the event happened.

It is best to choose a topic that happened at least 20 years ago. This way, you can see how it affected things right away and also how it continued to have an impact over a long time.

## MAKE IT CONNECT

By exploring these three areas, you'll build a strong case for why your topic is a turning point in history.

1. Background research: Check out what happened before the turning point. See how previous events led up to this important moment in history.
2. Contextualization: Look into the people who were part of the turning point. How did their understanding, motivation, or goals change to make this significant event happen?
3. Significance: Show the immediate and long-term changes that occurred after the turning point. Use evidence and analyze what it means.



Have a great time doing your research!