



Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History (4 - 5)

The 2026 History Day theme asks students to think about how big changes (revolutions), smaller fixes (reforms), and people's responses (reactions) have shaped history.

MAKE IT CONNECT TO THE THEME WORDS

Your topic should connect to the parts of the theme that make sense.

- All topics should connect to **reaction**.
- A **reaction** is how people respond, and it can sometimes lead to big changes or new rules.
- A **reform** is when people make changes to fix problems, but they change everything.
- If small changes don't happen or don't go far enough, people may push for a **revolution**.
- A **revolution** is a huge change where people want to replace the old system or leaders.

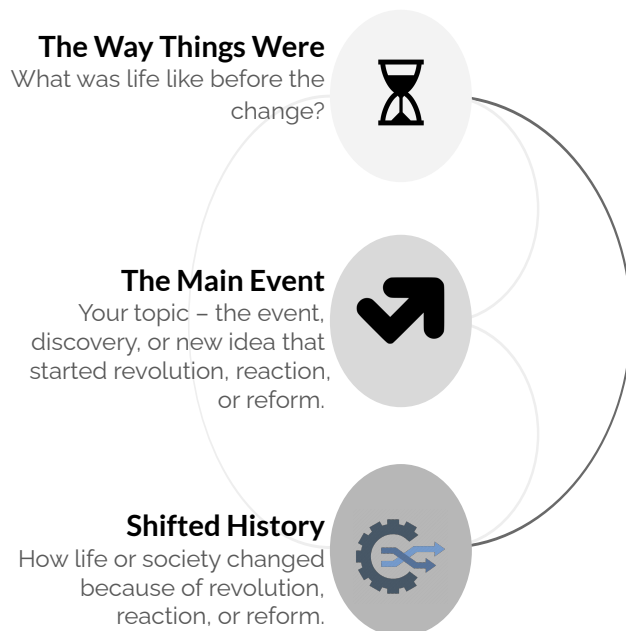
MAKE IT ABOUT HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Which came before your topic — revolution, reaction, or reform? What made people want change? Did everyone's life change the same way? Did a failed reform lead to a bigger revolution?

MAKE IT ABOUT IMPACT

To understand your topic, explore how it changed people's lives through revolution, reaction, and reform. Ask yourself:

- What happens when a big change (revolution) doesn't work?
- How can fixing problems in smaller ways (reforms) still make life better?
- When a court makes a decision, how do people react? Can it lead to more changes?
- How do new ideas or discoveries make people react or bring new changes to society?



THINK LIKE A HISTORIAN

Historical thinking requires that a topic be investigated and researched from different perspectives. Reflect on:

Significance - Was your topic important in history?

Chronology - When did it happen and what events came before or after?

Multiple perspectives - Did all groups feel the change the same way? Who benefitted, and who was left out?

Context - What happened that made people want change?

Evidence - What do letters, newspapers, or photos show?

Historical Lens - Look at your topic through political, social, cultural, or economic history.