



Connection to Theme & Narrowing Your Topic – Graphic Organizer

Name:

Date:

Period:

Start with a Reference Article

Before you can connect your topic to the theme, you need some basic information from a reference article. A **reference article** is a type of article (often found in encyclopedias, textbooks, or research databases) that gives readers factual background information about a topic. You can access encyclopedia articles on the [California State Library](#) site.

A reference article usually includes:

Topic Overview

- A clear explanation of what the topic is.
- Basic facts, definitions, or history to help someone understand the subject.

Key Details

- Important people, events, or terms related to the topic.
- Be sure to look up terms that you don't know

Historical Context

- Dates, places, or statistics that give context.

Historical Significance

- Explanations of how the topic connects to larger ideas or fields of study.

Sources and References

- Citations or lists of where the information came from.
- These help readers check the accuracy or go deeper into research.



Topic Details	Vocab & Sentence Frames:
<p>Develop the context of your topic? (Who? When? What?):</p> <p>WHO - Who was involved? Who was affected?</p> <p>WHAT - What is the heart of your topic? What changed?</p> <p>WHERE - Where did it take place?</p> <p>WHEN - When did it happen? How long of a time period was it?</p> <p>WHY - Why did it happen? What caused it?</p> <p>WHY - Why is it important? What were the outcomes? Why do we care today?</p>	<p>Context: What happened before your topic</p> <p>WHO <i>... benefited from this?</i> <i>... was harmed by this?</i> <i>... made the decisions about this?</i></p> <p>WHAT <i>... were the conditions at the time?</i> <i>... were arguments for and against this?</i> <i>... was most significant about this?</i></p> <p>WHERE <i>... were similar situations or events?</i> <i>... can we find more information/corroboation?</i></p> <p>WHY <i>... was this important?</i> <i>... is this relevant to us today?</i> <i>... was this allowed to happen?</i></p> <p><i>My topic is about _____, which happened in _____ (year/place) and involved _____.</i></p> <p>Significance: Why your topic matters</p> <p><i>This topic was significant because _____, and it is historically significant because _____.</i></p> <p>More sentence frames are on the last page of this document.</p>
Connection to Theme: REVOLUTION – Big, Dramatic Change	
<p>What systems, traditions, or power figures were overturned?</p>	<p>Revolution: A big, dramatic change in systems, traditions, or authority.</p> <p><i>Before this revolution, _____ was the (system/tradition), but it was overturned when _____.</i></p>



Who pushed for this revolution, and what was their perspective?	Perspective: A group's point of view about the revolution. <i>The revolution was led by _____, who believed _____.</i>
What evidence shows the significance of this sudden change?	Significance: The short and long term importance of the change <i>Evidence of the sudden change is _____, which shows the revolution was significant because _____.</i>

Connection to Theme: REFORM – Improvements or Adjustments

Did the heart of your topic lead to changes that improved society, government, or daily life?	Reform: Changes that improve society, government, or daily life without overthrowing the system. <i>[Heart of topic] improved (society/government/daily life) by _____.</i>
What specific reforms happened?	<i>A reform that happened was _____, which changed _____.</i>
Who did the reforms help? How did the reforms help?	<i>[The reform] was (successful/unsuccessful) because _____.</i>
Who did the reforms harm? How did the reforms cause harm?	Perspective: The way different groups understood or judged the reforms. <i>Supporters thought the reform was _____, while opponents thought it was _____.</i>
How did different perspectives view the reforms?	



Connection to Theme: REACTION – Response to Change

What **reactions** did people have to this part of your topic?

Reaction: How people respond to change

Some people reacted by _____, while others reacted by _____.

Who and how did groups or individuals **support** the change?

Supporters' Perspective: Why some people agreed with or welcomed the change.

[Supporters] showed their perspective by _____ because they believed _____.

Who and how did groups or individuals **oppose** the change?

Opponents Perspective: Why some people resisted or disagreed with the change.

[Opponents] reacted by _____ because they thought _____.

What was the impact of the reactions? Did reactions make the **revolution** or **reform** stronger or weaker?

Impact: The effect or influence the reaction had on people, society, or history.

The reactions made the movement (stronger/weaker) because _____.

Your Narrowed Topic

History Day projects are limited in size, so narrow topics are better than broad topics. After doing some preliminary research and thinking about the theme, consider how you can narrow your topic.

My original topic:

Example:

Original topic: *Medical Ethics*

The central part of my topic:

Central part of my topic: *Cancer Research and HeLa Cells*

Which theme word (revolution or reform) connects to the central part of your topic? Why?

Theme word that connects to the central part of my topic: *Revolution*
Theme word(s) that connect to the impact of my topic: *Reform & Reaction*
Theme word(s) that connect to the



<p>Which theme word(s) connect best to the historical context of your topic (revolution, reform, or reaction)? Why?</p> <p>Which theme word(s) connects best to the significance of your topic? Why?</p> <p>Narrowed topic:</p> <p><i>hint: emphasize the central part of your topic</i></p>	<p>historical context of my topic: <i>none</i></p> <p>Narrowed topic: <i>HeLa Cells: the War on Cancer and Bioethics</i></p>
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Next Steps: Research Questions

<p>Research Question: A question that starts with how or why, leading to analysis and multiple possible answers.</p> <p>Write one research question for each theme word:</p> <p>Revolution:</p> <p>Reform:</p> <p>Reaction:</p>	<p><i>Your research question should be clear, specific, and arguable. It should be a question you don't know the answer to.</i></p> <p><i>How/Why did this revolution overturn/change _____?</i></p> <p><i>How/Why did this reform improve _____?</i></p> <p><i>How/Why did people react to _____?</i></p> <p><i>Helpful Language: Cause, Effect, Compare, Impact, Change, Influence Challenge</i></p>
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Questions to Ask of the Past

WHO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... benefited from this? ... was harmed by this? ... made the decisions about this? ... was most directly affected? ... reported about this at the time? ... 's perspective does the narrative represent? ... 's voice was not heard from about this?
WHAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... were the causes and consequences of this? ... were the conditions at the time? ... were the obstacles to this? ... was another alternative explanation? ... were arguments for and against this? ... was most significant about this? ... judgements are stated/implicit in the narrative? ... language is used to describe this? ... is left out of the narrative? ... assumptions are embedded in the narrative?
WHERE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... did this take place? ... were similar situations or events? ... can we find more information/corroboration? ... was this narrative about it developed?
WHY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... was this important? ... is this relevant to us today? ... was it described in this way? ... was this allowed to happen? ... is there a need to re-examine this today?
HOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... did this impact history at the time? ... is this period of time labeled? ... might other people label this period of time? ... did this harm different people? ... did this help people? ... do we know about this? ... does this affect us now? ... can we learn from this? ... can we rectify or address injustices from this?

From "Topic Selection Resources" by Annie Olson, Sequoia Union High School District



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