

Welcome!

We will get started in a few minutes. While we wait for everyone to get settled, here are a few quick things:

This is a webinar -
your camera and mic are off

Q&A is for big-picture questions
- not individual project help

Let's try Reactions now -
send a wave when you read this!

Open the slides so you can
engage with our polls tonight

Slides:
canva.link/theme-webinar-2627

HISTORY DAY CALIFORNIA

HISTORY DAY CALIFORNIA



Theme Webinar

2026 - 2027



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Sponsored by: CA Foundation for History Education

This Year's Theme:

Slides: canva.link/theme-webinar-2627

NATIONAL HISTORY DAY 2027

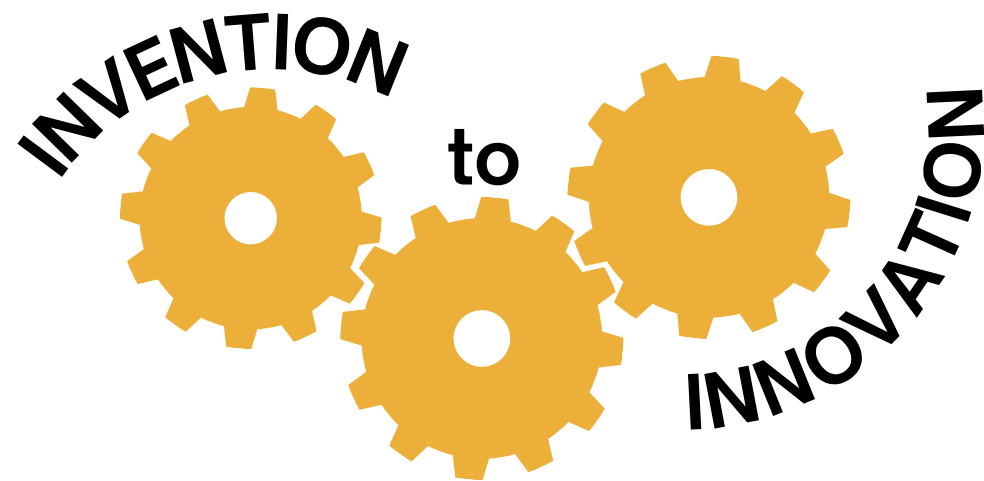
***INNOVATION
IN HISTORY***

IMPACT, INFLUENCE, CHANGE

What is the theme asking?

★ An innovation is what changed because of what someone made or a new way of thinking. Historians study what happened because of those changes. ★

This theme asks us to look at how new inventions and ideas created changes that reshaped society and culture.



INVENTION/NEW IDEA

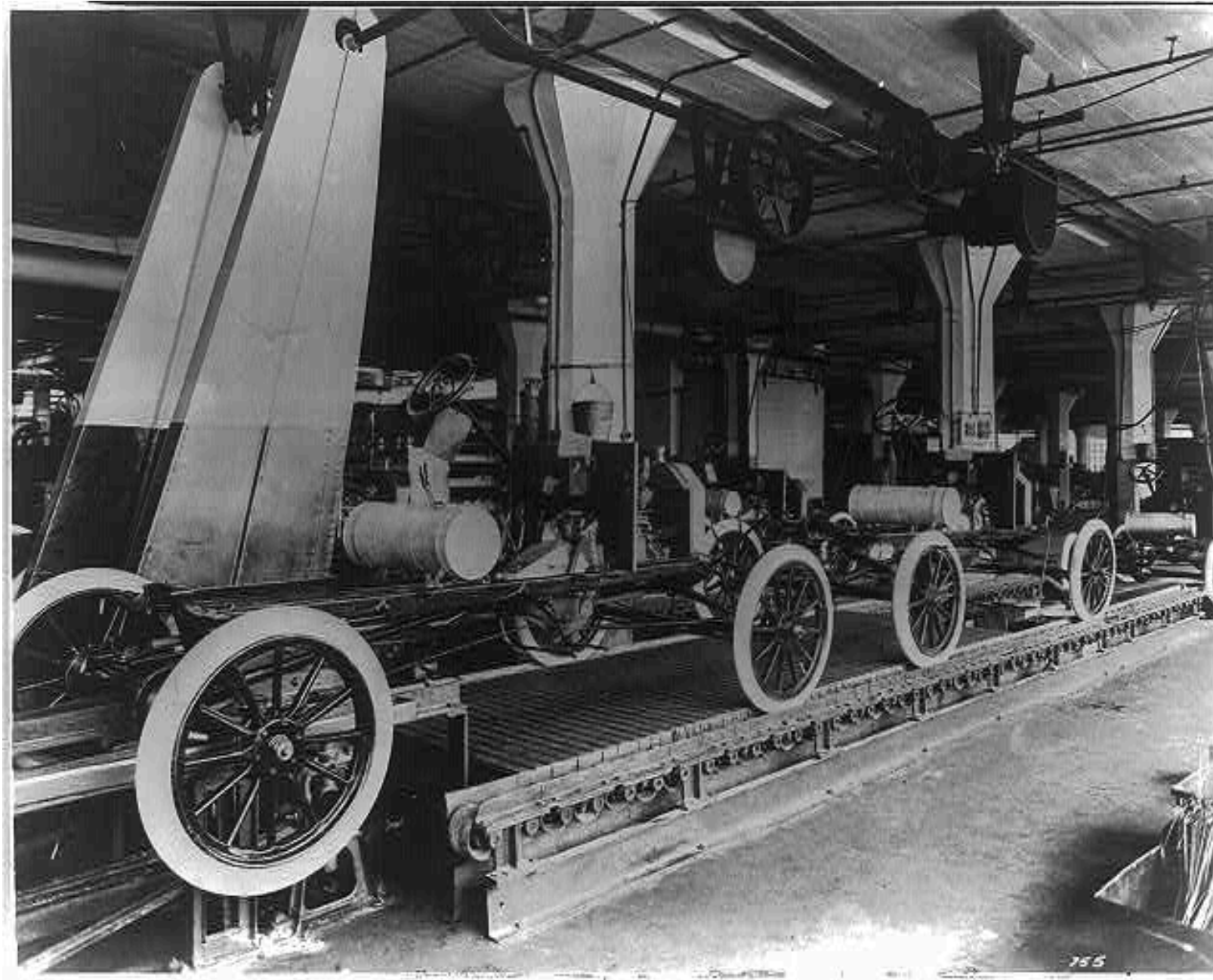
A solution to a problem that has the potential to create change.

INNOVATION

A new idea that transforms how society works.

Invention or Innovation?

Ford offered new paint colors in the early 1900s. Then, in 1913, Ford began the moving assembly line.



Assembly line at the Ford Motor Company's Highland Park plant. Highland Park Michigan, ca. 1913.
Photograph. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2011661021/>.

Which one changed the rules of the game for the auto industry?

- ☐ A) A new paint color option
- ☐ B) The moving assembly line
- ☐ C) Both equally
- ☐ D) Neither

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B: The Moving Assembly Line

Same car, but a new process that made cars faster to build and cheaper to buy.

The assembly line also pulled other industries along with it.

**That's the difference between a change
and an innovation.**

Spot the Innovation

ROUND 1: Seat Belt



Photo: University of Minnesota College of Science and Engineering (@umncse), via Venn Foundation.

James "Crash" Ryan invented the retractable seat belt:
What happened next that made it an innovation?

☐ A) It was patented and sold successfully

☐ B) It became more comfortable over time

☐ C) A law later required it in every car, making it a life-saving standard

☐ D) Other car companies copied the design

Submit

Spot the Innovation

ROUND 2: Sesame Street



Season 12 Cast Photo. American Archive of Public Broadcasting (GBH and Library of Congress), americanarchive.org/special_collections/sesame-street.

**TV already existed:
What did Sesame Street do differently
that made it innovative?**

☐ A) It had puppets instead of humans

☐ B) It aired daily instead of weekly

☐ C) It was the first show made for children

☐ D) It used an existing technology (TV) in a brand-new way — to deliver early childhood education

Submit

Same Tool, New Purpose

A law required the seat belt in every car,
so it became a life-saving standard.

Sesame Street used TV to delivery early education,
which was a a brand-new way to use TV.

**Innovation isn't always a new thing.
Sometimes it's an existing tool used in a way that
changes what's possible.**

Identify the Lens

IMPACT

Includes the short-term and long term intended benefits and unintended side effects.

INFLUENCE

The ability of the innovation to spread. How it changed people's thinking.

CHANGE

Proof showing society could never go back to the way it was before.

Case 1: The Free Speech Movement (1964)

Directions: React with the icon that best fits: is this mainly about Impact, Influence, or Change?

UC Berkeley, October 1964. A dispute over a student information table became one of the first mass acts of civil disobedience on an American college campus.

Influence: The tactics spread rapidly to campuses nationwide.

Change: By January 1965, the university reversed its own rules and allowed political activity on campus.



Steven Marcus Photograph. "Mario Savio speaking from the top of the police car." BANC PIC 2000.002--NEG Strip 6:7. Steven Marcus Free Speech Movement Photographs, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. Available via Calisphere: calisphere.org/item/ark:/13030/tf5j49n817/



REACT WITH EMOJIS!



Impact



Influence



Change

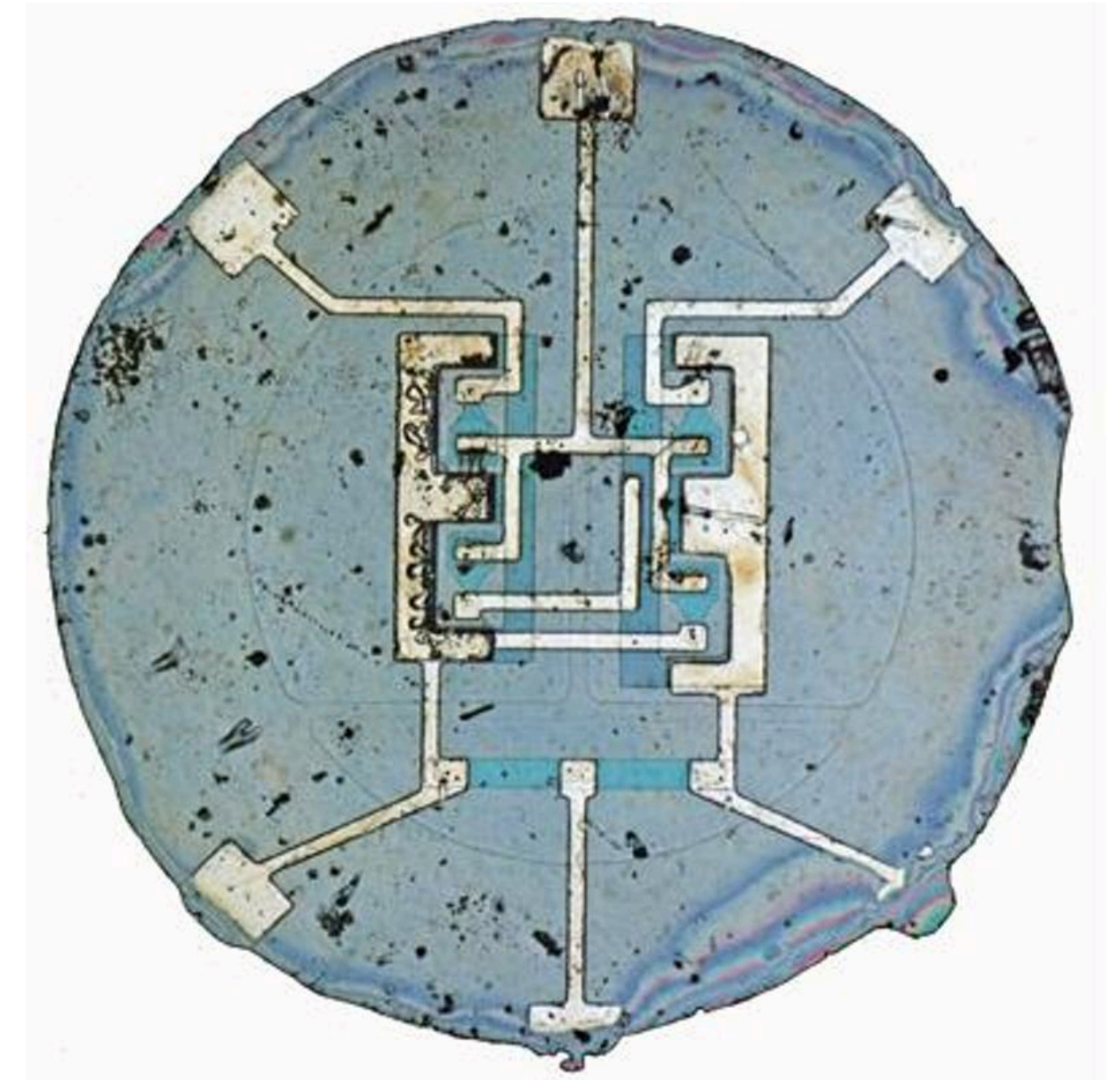
Case 2: The Integrated Circuit (1959)

Directions: React with the icon that best fits: is this mainly about Impact, Influence, or Change?

An entire electronic circuit packed onto a single silicon chip.

Impact: Powered the Apollo Guidance Computer and the personal computer revolution.

Change: Modern computing depends on this shift - there's no going back to hand-wired circuits.



Laws, David. "Fairchild Semiconductor: The 60th Anniversary of a Silicon Valley Legend." Computer History Museum, 19 Sept. 2017, computerhistory.org/blog/fairchild-semiconductor-the-60th-anniversary-of-a-silicon-valley-legend/. Image: "Fairchild's first integrated circuit had four transistors, 1960."



REACT WITH EMOJIS!



Impact



Influence



Change

Case 3: Free Breakfast for Children (1969)

Directions: React with the icon that best fits: is this mainly about Impact, Influence, or Change?

Oakland, January 1969. Started with 11 children in a West Oakland church.

Impact: Spread to over 20 cities within the year, feeding more than 20,000 children daily.

Change: In 1975, the federal government created a permanent national School Breakfast Program. Free school breakfast is now standard in American public schools.



Pien, Diane. "Black Panther Party's Free Breakfast Program (1969-1980)." BlackPast.org, 11 Feb. 2010, blackpast.org/african-american-history/black-panther-partys-free-breakfast-program-1969-1980/. Photo by Ducho Dennis.



REACT WITH EMOJIS!



Impact



Influence



Change

Case 4: Hetch Hetchy Reservoir

Directions: React with the icon that best fits: is this mainly about Impact, Influence, or Change?

An engineering innovation that brought reliable water to San Francisco - and also flooded a valley in Yosemite and displaced Native communities.

The question isn't just "impact, yes or no?"
It's "impact on whom?"

Every impact, influence, and change looks different depending on whose experience you center.



Harrell, Ashley. "Why You Need to Hike This Quiet Corner of Yosemite Right Now." SFGATE, 1 June 2023, sfgate.com/california-parks/article/best-spring-hiking-yosemite-hetch-hetchy-18128132.php. Image: "Hetch Hetchy Valley is seen in 1917, left, before the dam was built and in 2012, right, after the Tuolumne River was dammed." Images via Getty/Illustration by SFGATE.



REACT WITH EMOJIS!



Impact



Influence



Change

Why "In History" Matters

Why might a very recent topic (like generative AI) be hard to use for an NHD project?

- ☐ A) It's not interesting enough
- ☐ B) We don't yet know its long-term impact
- ☐ C) There aren't enough sources about it
- ☐ D) Doesn't count as history

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You're Too Close to See It

B: We don't yet know its long-term impact.

NHD recommends topics from at least 20-25 years ago - not because recent topics don't matter, but because you can't yet see the long-term change.

Which sentence most clearly shows why society could never go back to the way it was before?

POLL: Which sentence most clearly shows why society could never go back to the way it was before?

A) The paper clip made it easier to organize papers.

B) Before the Cherokee syllabary, the Cherokee language had no written form; after Sequoyah's invention, it could be recorded, printed, and passed down forever.

C) Universal education became widespread in the 1800s and changed schools.

Which sentence most clearly shows why society could never go back to the way it was before?

☐ A) Before the Cherokee syllabary, the Cherokee language had no written form; and after Sequoyah's invention, it could be recorded, printed, and passed down.

☐ B) The paper clip made it easier to organize papers.

☐ C) Universal education became widespread in the 1800s and changed schools.

☐ D) National History Day started in 1974.

Submit

A - What Makes It Work

It names the before, the after, and why going back isn't possible.

Now it's your turn: draft one sentence about a topic you're considering.

"My topic changed things because ____, and we can't go back because ____."

Guiding Questions

What problem or need drove this innovation. How did necessity help create the new idea or technology?

How did the innovation change lives and society in the short-term? What were the immediate effects?

How did people feel about the innovation at the time? Did everyone feel the same way?

How did the innovation changes lives and society over time? What was the legacy of the innovation?

Who benefited and who did not? Which groups of people benefitted and which groups did not?

How does the innovation connect to modern technology, thoughts, or social structures?

**GUIDING
QUESTIONS**

Recap & Resources

IMPACT: the short- and long-term effects

INFLUENCE: how far and how deeply it spread

CHANGE: proof we can't go back

Find more at nhd.org/theme and nhdca.org/sample-projects

History Day California 2026-2027

QUESTIONS

History Day California 2026-2027

Webinar Series!

RESEARCH QUESTIONS: September 28

AI - DON'T USE IT: October 1

PRIMARY & SECONDARY SOURCES: October 5

CRAFTING THESIS STATEMENTS: October 15

STUDENT VOICE, EVIDENCE, & CLAIM: November 2

SHOWING HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE: November 16

ORGANIZING EVIDENCE: December 7

REQUIRED ELEMENTS REVIEW: January 11

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