

Turning Points in American History

Choose a topic in American history from 1754-1900 that interests you. Luckily, almost any topic that interests you can also relate to this year's final project theme: *Turning Points in History: People, Ideas, Events*. According to the Merriam Webster Dictionary, a **turning point** is, "a point at which significant change occurs."

In the words of Adrienne Pritchard, the manager of National History Day:

"When thinking about turning points in history, there is a wide variety of potential topics since change comes in many forms. Change could be economic, political, social or cultural. It could come in the form of advancements in science and technology such as the discovery of atomic energy. It could come in the form of human invention such as the first steam locomotive. Change could mean the discovery of copper in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. It could be Sherman's March to the Sea during the Civil War or the Civil Rights Movement's March on Washington in 1963."

The theme asks that your project focus on a person, idea, event, or a combination of these. However, don't attempt to focus on all three if it doesn't fit your topic.

People

When considering people, ask yourself— Who has contributed to important turning points in history? Who has made turning point discoveries or pushed for change? This could be an individual or a group. For example, Henry Ford and his use of the assembly line in auto making or the Freedom Riders and segregation in the southern United States.

Ideas

When considering ideas, ask yourself what ideas have caused change in history? What movements, beliefs, and theories have resulted in turning points? For example, John Muir and the conservation movement in the United States or the Sears Roebuck Catalogue and the Rise of Mass Consumerism.

Events

When considering events, ask yourself what events have led to change in history? What events have been the result of turning points?

Turning Points in U.S. History

Points: Paper 75, Presentation 25

Due Dates:

Rough Draft due 12/9 (uploaded to turnitin.com 12/8)

Final Draft Due 12/12 (uploaded to turnitin.com 12/11)

Presentations begin 12/12

Objective: Students will analyze and explain a major turning point in U.S. history during the time period 1754-1900, describing its impact on the society of the United States and its lasting legacy.

Task: Students will create a 4 page paper analyzing and explaining the turning point.

Paper Guidelines:

1. Times New Roman, 12 pt. font., double spaced
2. Name in top right hand corner. (You only need your name)
3. After your name, push enter once, write the title, push enter once, and begin writing.
4. Include a bibliography with at least 4 sources. (Bibliography is not counted as one of the four pages)
5. Must include citations. Footnotes/endnotes, or parenthetical references. MLA or Chicago Manual is fine. *More on how to do this, with examples, to follow.*

Presentation Guidelines

1. 5 minute presentation about the important parts of your topic.
2. No reading.

****Rubrics to follow**

Topics: Only one person per topic, per period. Listed below are possible topics. Feel free to research your own, whatever interests you, but be sure to get it approved before you begin work.

Sample Topics:

- a. French and Indian War
- b. Revolution
- c. Creating the Constitution
- d. Revolution of 1800
- e. Louisiana Purchase
- f. War of 1812
- g. Monroe Doctrine
- h. Corrupt Bargain of 1824

- i. Tripolitan Wars
- j. Civil War
- k. Mexican-American War
- l. Industrial Revolution
- m. Battle of Wounded Knee
- n. Spanish-American War
- o. Purchase of Alaska
- p. Trail of Tears
- q. Dred Scott Case
- r. Andrew Jackson Presidency
- s. XYZ Affair
- t. Sioux Wars
- u. Seneca Falls Convention
- v. Abolition Movement
- w. Civil Rights Amendments
- x. Manifest Destiny
- y. Gilded Age
- z. Transcontinental Railroad

Etc.... See me with your ideas.

Guiding Questions

Use these questions to help guide you as you write your paper:

- What circumstances led up to your turning point?
- Who was involved in your turning point?
- What act, idea or event caused a change in how people thought or what they did? How about the effects: new ideas, new laws, new technologies, new cultural standards? And how did these develop over time?
- What was the end result?
- What's the legacy of your turning point today?