

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?

Guidelines

Content Standard:

11.1--Students analyze the significant events in the founding of the nation and its attempts to realize the philosophy of government described in the Declaration of Independence

11.4--Students trace the rise of the United States to its role as a world power in the twentieth century.

Common Core Standards:

Reading History—Integration of Knowledge and Ideas 7. Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., quantitative data, video, multimedia) in order to address a question or solve a problem

Writing History Standards—Production and Distribution of Writing 4-7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

Task: Students will select a *turning point* to research, then create a written analysis of that issue. (Only 2 people per topic). Focus on the background of the issue, what happened, and *why* it is an important turning point in U.S. History.

Paper:

1. 5 full pages; Times New Roman, 12 point font, Double Spaced
2. Uploaded night before due date
3. Follow MLA formatting (Name in the top right); separate works cited page. (You may use Chicago Manual style of writing if you wish)
4. Include references in your paper for data.

Essential Questions

Background

- What led up to this turning point?
- In what context does this turning point take place? (What's going on in the U.S.?)
- Who was involved in the event?

Event

- What happened?
- When did the event take place? How long did it go on for?
- Describe what the people involved did for this turning point.

Effects

- Why is this considered a “point at which significant change occurs”?

- In what ways did this turning point change the U.S. during this time period?
- What is the legacy of that turning point today?

Sample Topics

- Valley Forge and the Development of the Continental Army
- The Continental Association and the Coming of the American Revolution
- Federal Power and the Case of *McCulloch v. Maryland*
- *Plessy v. Ferguson* and the Growth of Jim Crow
- The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and the Coming of the Civil War
- The Continental Association and the Coming of the American Revolution
- The Creation of the Bill of Rights and their Importance in U.S. society
- The Impact of the Erie Canal
- The Sinking of the *USS Maine* and the Beginning of the Spanish American War
- Samuel Gompers and the Founding of the American Federation of Labor

Sample of “Effects”

For example, the student who selected Thomas Edison and the electric lamp for their turning point might list the following as a result:

- a. As a result of this event, the “night shift” was made possible.
- b. As a result of this event, people bought fewer candles.
- c. As a result of this event, the number of house fires eventually decreased.
- d. As a result of this event, literacy increased.

Multiple Choice Final

On the day of the final there will be a multiple choice exam. There will be at least 150 questions on the exam, and it will be cumulative. There is a study guide that will be completed and due on 12/14.

I. Topics to Study for the Final Exam—For each topic, be able to explain what each item is and why it is important

- American Revolution
- Bill of Rights
- Declaration of Independence
- Antebellum America
- Mexican-American War
- Civil War
- Reconstruction
- Frontier
- Industrialization
- Immigration and Urbanization
- Imperialism
- Progressive Era

II. Chapters to Study

- Chapter 1, p.94-131—*American Revolution and Constitution*
 - Bill of Rights
 - The Constitution Handbook—p.136
 - Chapter 2, p.168-225—*Antebellum America, Manifest Destiny, Civil War, Reconstruction*
 - Chapter 3, p.232-281—*Settling the West, Industrialization, Immigration & Urbanization, Progressive Era*
 - Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, pgs.290-357—*Imperialism and Progressive Era*
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Discuss the final options with your parents/guardians. Then, let me know which final assessment you will complete by checking off the box.

Name: _____ Paper Exam

Parent Signature: _____