SOCIAL STUDIES FAIR TOPICS FOR STUDENTS

“TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY IN HISTORY”

Every year the Social Studies Fair frames students' research within a historical theme. The theme is chosen by the National History Day (NHD) Foundation for the broad application to world, national, or state history and its relevance to ancient history or to the more recent past. This year’s theme is TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY in History. The intentional selection of the theme for NHD is to provide an opportunity for students to push past the antiquated view of history as mere facts and dates and drill down into historical content to develop perspective and understanding.

The following is not an exhaustive list but simply a set of suggestions. Students can choose from these topics or use these to help them brainstorm for other ideas. Students are free to choose from a broad range of individuals, groups, or documents relating to the theme.

National Topics – Some topics excerpted from National History Day
U.S. HISTORY SAMPLE TOPICS

- The Winter of Valley Forge: Triumph and Tragedy in the Continental Army
- The Missouri Compromise: Unable to Hold Off the Tragedy of the Civil War
- Salem Witch Trials
- Smallpox and Inoculation
- Posthumous Portraiture: Creating Artistic Triumph out of Tragedy
- The First Battle of Bull Run: Anticipated Union Triumph Leads to Tragedy
- Mormon Migration to Utah
- Chicago: America’s Second City
- Hudson River Valley School: Triumph of Nature
- The Battle of Little Bighorn
- The Triumphs and Tragedies of the Transcontinental Railroad
- D-Day: Triumph Despite Tragedy
- Ford Motor Company’s Assembly Line: A Triumph for Capitalism
- Banning of DDT: Rachel Carson’s Triumph
- Loving v. Virginia: Tragedy of Time, Triumph of Love
- The Great Raid on Camp Cabanatuan
- Rerouting the Chicago River: An Engineering Triumph
- Indentured Servants in Colonial Virginia
- The Creation of the Atomic Bomb: Scientific Triumph or Human Tragedy?
- Abstract Expressionism: American Artistic Triumph
- Impressment of Sailors: An American Tragedy?
- The Tragedy of McCarthyism
- The Three-Fifths Compromise
- The Tet Offensive
- American Settlers Versus Native Americans
- Little Rock Nine: Triumph and Tragedy of Integration
• Reconstruction: Tragedy Follows Triumph
• The Jungle and the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906
• Alice Paul and the Woman Suffrage Movement
• Executive Order 8802: Security over Civil Liberties

EUROPEAN HISTORY SAMPLE TOPICS

• The Triumph of Gutenberg’s Printing Press
• Nazi Art Looting During World War II
• The Crusades: A Tragedy of Religious Proportion
• The Battle of Bosworth Field: The End to the Wars of the Roses
• Edict of Nantes: Triumph or Tragedy?
• Triumph and Tragedy of the French Resistance in World War II
• The Protestant Reformation and the European Wars of Religion
• William Shakespeare: Triumph Through His Tragedies
• Treaty of Versailles: Triumph or Tragedy?
• Martin Luther, Pope Leo X, and the Reformation: The Triumph of Propaganda
• The Marshall Plan: Economic Reconstruction of Europe
• Isabella, Ferdinand, and the Spanish Reconquista
• Galileo: The Tragic Consequences of Triumph in the Skies
• The German U-Boats in the Battle of the Atlantic
• The Great Fire of London: Rebuilding Act of 1667
• The Easter Rising: The Triumphs and Tragedies of a Rebellion
• King Charles I: A Tragic End for the Monarchy
• Mary Queen of Scots and John Knox: Reformation in Scotland
• The Founding of the European Union
• King Henry VIII Versus the Catholic Church
• The Division of Berlin After World War II
• Emmeline Pankhurst and her Struggle for Suffrage in Great Britain
• Catherine de’ Medici and the Huguenots
• Neville Chamberlain: The Tragedy of Appeasement
• Battle of Waterloo: New Beginnings from the End
• Marco Polo: Economy of the Silk Road
• Vincent Van Gogh: The Triumph and Tragedy of Genius
• Thomas Cromwell: Suppression of Monasteries
• Christopher Columbus: Triumph or Tragedy?
WORLD HISTORY SAMPLE TOPICS

• Athens, Sparta, and the Battle of Marathon
• The Shimabara Rebellion: Catholic Tragedy, Buddhist Triumph
• Emperor Meiji’s Modernization of Japan
• Spanish Influenza: The Tragedy of a Deadly Virus in Wartime
• The Castle Hill Convict Rebellion: An Australian Tragedy
• The Triumph and Tragedy of the Japanese Invasion of Manchuria
• The Partition of India: Triumph of Independence, Tragedy of Division
• The Six-Day War
• The Iran Hostage Crisis
• Colonization: The French in Vietnam
• The Crown Lands Acts of 1861: an Australian Tragedy
• Emily Hobhouse and the Second Boer war Concentration Camps
• Creation of the State of Israel
• Philippine-American War
• Cultural Revolution in China
• Joseph Stalin and the Purge of Russia
• Alexander the Great: Personal Triumph and Tragedy
• Anwar Sadat: Struggle for Peace
• South African Apartheid and the Division of a Nation
• Saladin: Military Triumph During the Crusades
• Genghis Khan: Cartography and Power
• Chiune Sugihara: The Triumph of a World War II Japanese Diplomat
• Triumph and Tragedy of King Tut’s Treasure
• Akbar I: The Triumph of Unification
• Arusha Accords of 1993: The Tragedy of Failure
• Tragedy of Blood Diamonds, Triumph of the Kimberley Process
• The Tragedy of Religious Conflict in 1980s Nigeria