The NHD Topic Tree
“Triumph & Tragedy in History”

Have students who are stuck on selecting a topic? Want to provide a little passive inspiration? **Grow an NHD Topic Tree** in your classroom!

- Each branch is a different area of history
- Each leaf is a different topic idea and leading question
- When a student wants to use that topic, tell him or her to just pick the leaf off the tree

You can use the topics we have brainstormed or use the blank page to create your own ideas. Try asking students to contribute ideas to the NHD Topic Tree as well!
In 1934, Minneapolis Local 574 led a trucker’s strike. How did the violence of the Minneapolis Teamster’s Strike help win and negotiate union demands?

In 1925, the County Attorney of Minnesota attempted to shut down The Saturday Press, citing a 1925 Public Nuisance Law. What was the decision of Near v. Minnesota?

William Williams was executed in 1906 after he was found guilty of murder. How did the complications of his death lead to the termination of the death penalty in Minnesota?

Congress passed the BWCA Wilderness Act in 1978. How did tension over land use in the Boundary Waters influence national legislation?

The Phyllis Wheatley House opened in 1917 to provide social resources for African Americans. How did the space and community of Wheatley House help organize against racism?

Dayton’s was Minneapolis’ leading retail merchandise store, now known as Target. How did Dayton’s build one of the most successful retail empires in Minnesota?

After the Vietnam War, many Southeast Asian refugees entered the US. How did the Indochina Refugee Resettlement Office in Minnesota change citizen demographics nationwide?

The Minnesota Journeymen Barbers became the first integrated barber union by 1902. How did the combined efforts of blacks and whites help achieve fair working conditions for Minnesotan barbers?

In 1956, the construction of I-94 split through the Rondo Neighborhood. What were some of the complications?
Due to high immigration starting in the late 1800s, the Immigration Act of 1924 was passed and was the most restrictive immigration legislation. Why?

The Reagan administration negotiated the sale of firearms to free American hostages from Iran. How did the Iran-Contra Affair shock the world?

Daniel Ellsberg shared The Pentagon Papers with the New York Times in 1971 to expose government action during the Vietnam War. How did the public respond to the Papers?

In 1862, the Morrill Land Grant Act awarded land to each state to help build academic institutions. How did race relations at the time limit who could attend these institutions?

In the 1900s, Harvey Wiley and the Poison Squad ate common food additives in order to show serious health effects. How did the work of this team change food safety?

After months of student-led demonstrations against the Communist government in protests in Tiananmen Square during June 1989 turned violent. What were the results?

When The Bracero Program started in 1942, many Mexican laborers were exposed to unsafe working conditions and unsanitary living environments. Was it fair?

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From 1976 to 1983, many Argentine children “disappeared,” leading The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo to organize protests against the military regime? What happened to these children?

Lech Walesa became the leader of the Polish labor movement after winning union rights and fair compensation for Gdansk shipyard workers. How did his leadership make him a government target?
In 1954, **Bolling v. Sharpe** ruled that discrimination by the federal government violated the Bill of Rights. How did this case differ from **Brown v. Board**?

The Supreme Court eliminated state statutes that denied the funding of education for children who were illegal immigrants in 1982. Though a success, what were the limitations of **Pyler v. Doe**?

During the summer of 1881, **African American Washerwomen** in Atlanta organized a strike. How did these women overcome the threat of white businesses and politicians to achieve their goal?

The National Guard was called in to deliver mail after the **U.S. Postal Strike of 1970**. What pushed President Nixon to negotiate with postal union leaders?

After a long competition, the **Vietnam Veterans Memorial** was built in 1982 to commemorate US soldiers who died during the Vietnam War. How did the memorial bring national shame and critique instead?

In 1969, a group of **Native Americans** attempted to reclaim the abandoned Alcatraz Island and prison. How did the **Occupation of Alcatraz** reignite the American Indian Movement?

In 1978, **Regents of the University of California v. Bakke** upheld affirmative action, but ruled that the use of racial quotas were prohibited. Did this case change college admission processes?

The Delano Grape Strike demanded federal minimum wage for Filipino farm workers. How did the use of consumer boycotts and other protest tactics gain rights for minority farm workers?

Construction for the **Gateway Arch** began in 1963 and opened in 1965 as a tribute to Thomas Jefferson, though the monument was originally pitched in 1934. Why was construction delayed?
The 1965 book *Unsafe at Any Speed* exposed manufacturer reluctance to improve safety in cars to avoid a loss of profits. How did this book lead to improved safety laws and requirements?

Norman Borlaug’s research in the production and farming of wheat varieties launched The Green Revolution during the mid-1900s. Were there other impacts on the agriculture industry?

Black women began working as mathematicians at NASA in the 1950s and played an important role in calculating space trajectories. How did segregation prevent NASA’s “Colored Computers” from being recognized?

Germ theory of disease, the idea that diseases were a result of microorganisms, was rejected until the late 1800s. Who worked to prove germ theory and how did their research lead to medical innovations?

In the late 1800s, horses were used to produce an antitoxin serum that could help prevent diphtheria. How did the government respond to the Jim the Horse Tetanus Scandal?

Andreas Gruentzig performed the first successful balloon angioplasty in September 1977. How has balloon angioplasty evolved since?

In 1949, George Orwell’s novel *1984* received negative backlash and was banned in Russia and some parts of the US. Why?

In 1985, the RIAA introduced the Parental Advisory label on certain recordings that contained explicit language. How did musicians respond to this label?

Many African-Americans who moved North during the Great Migration were influenced by The Chicago Defender. How did the paper motivate them to move?
During the 1936 Olympics in Nazi Germany, African-American sprinter Jesse Owens won four gold medals. How did the German government respond to his victories?

The National All-American Girls Professional Baseball League put women on the field to replace men fighting in WWII. How did the league affect public perception of women?

During the 1919 World Series, a group of eight players from the Chicago White Sox intentionally lost games. How did the public respond to Black Sox Scandal?

In 1973, Billie Jean King and Bobbie Riggs faced off in a tennis match dubbed "The Battle of the Sexes." How did King's defeat over Riggs help advance women's rights?

In 1949, no American had traveled to China, until the US Ping Pong team was invited for a match. How did the 1971 U.S. China Ping Pong Exchange lead to international diplomacy?

In 1927, The Jazz Singer became the first speaking film, ending the silent film era. How did "talkies" change the film industry?

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Betty Crocker was created as a persona to answer questions revolving the home. How did a marketing icon revolutionize domesticity?

Louise Brown was the first person born by in vitro fertilization in 1978, a form of reproduction that was considered controversial. How did the birth of Louise Brown change perceptions on IVF?
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In 1946, Eleanor Roosevelt served as the chair of the Human Rights Commission and developed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. How has the Declaration been adopted around the world?

During the Civil Rights Movement, Septima Clark established citizenship schools in the South. How did these schools successfully register Blacks to vote before the 1965 Voting Rights Act was passed?

In 1973, a group of Indians led the Wounded Knee Incident after the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation failed to impeach tribal president Richard Wilson. What was the significance of this location?

After Yuri Kochiyama's family was evacuated to the Santa Anita Assembly Center during Japanese Internment in the 1940s, she began engaging in radical social movements. How did her experiences help achieve reparations for Japanese internees?

From 1969 to 1974, students at UCLA began publishing Gidra, a radical Asian American newspaper. How did Gidra's organizing efforts bring about change during the modern Asian American movement?

James Meredith sued Ole Miss in 1962, stating he was denied based on race. After the Supreme Court ruled in his favor, the Kennedy administration ordered 500 U.S. Marshall's to escort Meredith. What was the reaction to the integration of Ole Miss?

In 1991, four Los Angeles Police Department officers violently beat a man named Rodney King. What were the effects of the "not guilty" verdict?

The Brown Berets were founded in the late 1960s during the Chicano movement and actively protested police brutality and government sanctioned violence. Were they successful?
At the height of the Cold War, the Soviet Union placed nuclear missiles on Cuba in order to deter a US attack. How did the US respond?

In 1961, the CIA operated Bay of Pigs Invasion failed to overthrow the Castro regime, questioning the efficiency of the Kennedy administration. Was the Kennedy administration ever successful?

After WWII, the remaining leaders of Nazi Germany were tried for their war crimes during the Holocaust. How did the Nuremberg Trials set a precedence on other international crime trials?

In the 1940s, Navajo Code Talkers were recruited into the US Marines, utilizing code to exchange classified information. How did Navajo Code Talkers play a pivotal role during WWII?

In 1968, US soldiers murdered unarmed civilians in the My Lai Massacre. How did this complicate the US’ presence abroad?

Due to the violence of the Vietnam War, much of the country disagreed with the United States’ continued presence in Southeast Asia. How did the Kent State Massacre push student beliefs about the war to the forefront?

In the late 1800s, journalist Nellie Bly went undercover to report on the conditions of those living in a women’s mental institution. What did Nellie Bly uncover?

The Equal Rights Amendment proposed in 1923, sought to end legal distinctions between men and women, and still hasn’t passed. What obstacles have supporters faced?

The Supreme Court ruled in Griswold v. Connecticut that state laws could not limit a married couple’s choice to use contraception. Why was the right to choose important?
The NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt was developed in 1985 to commemorate the death of affected individuals and demonstrate the pandemic. How did the quilt help educate the public about AIDS?

In 1950, Harry Hay formed the Mattachine Society, one of the first gay rights organizations in the US and conducted bar “sip-ins.” Did this organizing efforts help advance gay rights?

When the delivery of the October 1954 issue of ONE magazine was blocked, the magazine sued. Was the ruling of One, Inc. v. Olesen a victory for the gay rights movement?

Your Ideas

National History Day in Minnesota