

## Sample Topic List: The Individual in History: Actions and Legacies



Students creating a group documentary for National History Day

### Individual in History Sample Topics

The following is a list of possible research topics in preparation for National History Day 2009. The list is not inclusive but provides a starting point for teachers and students to begin brainstorming ideas for research and presentation as National History Day entries. Some of the most exciting and interesting topics are local in nature. Students should be encouraged to look for topics in their own communities. Whether students choose to create papers, exhibits, performances, websites or documentary presentations, they must be sure to place their topics into historical perspective and context and analyze the significance and impact of their topic in history.

- A. Phillip Randolph: Brotherhood of Pullman Porters
- Andrei Sakharov: Opposition to the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan
- Nat Turner's Rebellion: Leadership and Rebellion
- Gloria Steinem: National Women's Political Caucus
- Chief Joseph: Resistance to Reservations
- John Carlos and Tommie Smith: Olympic Project for Human Rights
- Jackie Robinson: Breaking the Color Barrier in Baseball
- Rosie the Riveter: Symbolizing Women's Workforce in World War II
- Eleanor of Aquitaine: The Second Crusade
- Catherine the Great: Westernization
- Mary Wollstonecraft: *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*
- Charlotte Perkins Gilman: *Women and Economics*
- Eleanor Roosevelt: The Human Rights Commission
- Horace Mann: Educational Reformer
- Emmeline Pankhurst: Women's Social and Political Union
- John Peter Zenger: The Freedom of the Press
- Ernesto Miranda: Protection of the Fifth Amendment
- Daniel O'Connell: The Liberator
- Bartholomew de Las Casas: Moral Issues in the Conquest of the Americas
- John Locke: The Social Contract Theory
- Martin Luther: Religious Reformer
- Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi: Change through Peaceful Activism
- Adam Smith: Free Trade
- Henry Ford: Big Business and World War II
- Alexander Hamilton: Federalist Papers
- Roy Kroc: *Fast Food Nation*
- John Maynard Keynes: The World Economics Conference
- John Muir: Sierra Club
- Jonas Salk: Victory of Discovery
- Galileo Galilei: The Scientific Revolution
- Elizabeth Blackwell: The First American Woman Doctor
- Sigmund Freud: The Unconscious Mind
- Rachel Carson: *Silent Spring*

- Antonine-Laurent de Lavoisier: The Father of Chemistry
- Dorothea Dix: Advocate for the Mentally Ill
- Robert Oppenheimer: Creator of the Atomic Bomb
- Walter Reed: Conquest of Yellow Fever and the Panama Canal
- Margaret Mead: Cultural Anthropologists
- Jane Goodall: United Nations' Messenger of Peace
- Steven Jobs: Inventor and Innovator
- Albert Einstein: Theory of Relativity
- Ponce de Leon: Transatlantic Travel and the Gulf Stream
- Genghis Khan: Uniting the Confederation
- Christopher Columbus: Charting New Territories
- Commodore Mathew Perry: Opening of Japan
- James Cook: The Cartography of Newfoundland
- Marco Polo: The Silk Road
- Prince Henry the Navigator: The School of Navigation
- Dorothea Lange: Images of the Japanese Internment Camps
- Marion Anderson: Unintentional Activist
- Vincent Van Gogh: Developing Expressionism
- Elvis: Rockabilly
- Charles Dickens: Writing to Illuminate the Class System
- Lewis Hine: Images to Change Labor Laws
- Picasso: Defining Modern Art
- Virginia Woolf: Bloomsbury Group
- Martha Graham: Pioneer of Modern Dance
- Thoreau: Resistance to the Mexican War
- Joseph Stalin: The Lion at Yalta
- Winston Churchill: Gifted Orator
- Anwar Sadat and Menachem Begin: Sharing the Nobel Peace Prize
- William the Conqueror: The Normandy Conquest
- Salah al-Din Yusuf ibn Ayyub: Recapturing Palestine
- Ayatollah Khomeini: The Islamic Revolution
- Roger Williams: The Separation of Church and State
- Ho Chi Minh: National Liberation Front
- Harry Truman: The Decision to Drop the Bomb
- Simón Bolívar: Latin American Independence
- Jose Martí: Cuba's War for Independence
- Jonas Savimbi: The Angolan Revolutionary
- Tecumsch: Battle of Tippecanoe
- Pancho Villa: Western Cartridge Company
- William Wallace: Battle of Stirling Bridge
- Nelson Mandela: Congress of the People
- Fidel Alejandro Castro Ruz: Bay of Pigs



Historical Performance: Elizabeth Blackwell  
National Contest



General Douglas MacArthur wades  
ashore during initial landing at Leyte:  
Courtesy of the National Archives