***Research the topic first****.* Do your secondary research first. Reading secondary resources will help you understand your subject more completely, point you to primary sources, and assist you in selecting the important themes you want to investigate and the key questions you want to ask.

*Select items to put on the exhibit.* You won't be able to use all the materials you find while doing your research. As you think about what to put on the exhibit, ask yourself the following questions:

***Does the item fit in with the NHD theme and the theme of your exhibit?  
-Does the item advance the story you are trying to tell?  
-Is a document you are thinking of displaying too long or too wordy? Is it easy to read and understand? Will it take up too much space in your exhibit?  
-Is the item visually interesting?  
-What images best tell your story?  
-Do you want to include artifacts in your exhibit?  
-Will your exhibit contain audiovisual materials?***

*Prepare the script.* Writing your titles, text, and labels is often referred to as writing the script. Like all good writing, your exhibit script needs to be grammatically correct, use good sentence structure, make wise word choices, and contain no spelling errors. You should expect to write several drafts. Exhibit labels are brief, so they need to be clear and concise.

Develop paperwork management system

Select a topic (think about what you are interested in), and the ***reasons you choose that topic***.

**Background reading (build context from lots of sources)** – KEEP TRACK OF SOURCES!

***Primary*** **sources** are historical documents, written accounts by first-hand witnesses, or objects that have survived from the past. Examples include letters, personal papers, and government documents, oral accounts, diaries, maps, and photographs, articles of clothing, artifacts (including art objects and architecture), coins, or stamps.

**Questions to answer about Primary Sources:**

1. ***Who created the source and why?***
2. ***Did the recorder have first-hand knowledge of the event, or report what others saw or heard?***
3. ***Was the recorder a neutral party or did the author have opinions or interests that might have influenced what was recorded?***
4. ***Did the recorder wish to inform or persuade others? Did the recorder have reasons to be honest or dishonest?***
5. **Every piece of evidence and every source must be read or viewed skeptically and critically.**
6. **Evidence should not be taken at face value. The author’s point of view must be considered.**
7. **Each piece of evidence and source must be crosschecked and compared with related sources.**

***What type of document is this? Is it a letter, an official proclamation, a private diary entry, an advertisement, or perhaps a coded message?***

1. ***Documents: Why do you think the document was written?***

***What evidence in the document helps you know why it was written?***

***Is there a bias or certain perspective that the author is writing from?***

1. ***Photographs/ Images:***

***What is the subject of the photograph? What does the photograph reveal about its subject?***

***What is the setting for the photograph? What other details do you observe? When and where in the past do you think the photograph was taken? How can you tell? How would you describe the photographer's point of view?***

1. ***Political Cartoons:*** List the objects, people or symbols you see in the cartoon. ***What do you think each symbol means? Describe the action taking place in the cartoon. Are there words? Do they help to clarify the cartoon’s symbols? In your opinion, what is the message of the cartoon? Do you think others will interpret it differently?***
2. ***Maps****:* Maps are symbolic representations of places set in relation to one another. All maps necessarily include some details and leave out others. Next time you look at a map ask yourself the following questions:

***When and where was the map produced? What details has the map-maker chosen to include (or exclude) in order to complete this representation? Why do you think the map was drawn?***

1. ***Artifacts:*** *Artifacts* take on many forms. They might be a coin, a stone tool found in an archaeology excavation, a piece of clothing, or even a piece of trash from your classroom’s rubbish bin. Keep these points in mind when analyzing an artifact:

***Why was this object created? What and where would it have been used? What does the artifact tell us about the technology at the time it was created? What can it tell us about the life and times of the people who used it?***

***Secondary*** **sources:** Secondary sources are accounts of past events created by people some time after those events happened.

**Questions to answer about secondary sources:**

Most evidence that historians analyze is biased in one way or another. It represents a certain perspective from one person or a group. Historians use the following guidelines when reviewing evidence from the past:

**Gather and record information** (full info on all sources & how you use each)

* National Archives  [http://www.archives.gov/research/](https://webmail.sanjacinto.k12.ca.us/owa/redir.aspx?C=Ae76tNCSK0qZhkiH_xN_XoJ7TqUZ4dFIozvUW6cxPxYfSGrHQHKh400hv8lBlgbogyJrzmHcKww.&URL=http://www.archives.gov/research/)
* Library of Congress [www.loc.gov](https://webmail.sanjacinto.k12.ca.us/owa/redir.aspx?C=Ae76tNCSK0qZhkiH_xN_XoJ7TqUZ4dFIozvUW6cxPxYfSGrHQHKh400hv8lBlgbogyJrzmHcKww.&URL=http://www.loc.gov)
* Search Engines for Academic Research:

<http://www.teachthought.com/technology/100-search-engines-for-academic-research/>

**Analyze and interpret sources** (who created it, why, when, etc.) Citation of Information: Write down the citation information you will later use for your Works Cited page. If it is a website, be sure to write down the entire web address. Be sure to include the date you accessed the website. See <http://content.easybib.com/citation-guides/mla-format/how-to-cite-a-website-mla/>

for detailed info of what you need to include.

**Develop thesis** (argument about topic)

**Finalize and put together project**- **write a conclusion** with your opinion

Be sure to include:

* Historical background introduction- “set the scene”. Time, place, era.
* Person’s biography…in your own words
* Map…location in the world
* Graphs…if applicable. Populations, demographics, statistics.
* Highlight a “moment that changed history”
* Photographs, images, visuals.
* 500 word limit.