

Breaking Barriers in History

National History Day suggests various topics every year. Some of these topics work better than others given the available primary sources. This list highlights topics have ample primary sources available at the UW Libraries.

Some practical tips on choosing a topic:

- Choose an event or topic that occurred in the **20th or 19th centuries**.
- Choose an event or topic that **takes place in the United States**.
- Choose an event or topic that takes place in a **country where English is one of the primary languages**.
- Choose an event that took place **more than 20 years ago**.

Twentieth Century: for sources see guides.lib.uw.edu/research/hd-primary/20th

Pacific Northwest

- Breaking Through to the Sound: Construction of the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks
- Breaking the Political Barrier: The 1910 Campaign for Suffrage in Washington State
- Tearing Down Dams: Restoring the Elwah River
- Local Rosie the Riveters: Women Breaking Barriers at Boeing During WWII
- Bertha Landes: Breaking Barriers in Seattle City Hall

United States

- Breaking Through the Schoolhouse Doors: The Little Rock Nine & the Educational Integration
- Breaking Down the Barrier for Love: Loving v. Virginia
- Overcoming Barriers: The Americans with Disabilities Act
- Breaking the Barrier of Inequality: LGBTQ Resistance at Stonewall
- Crossing the Barrier of the Earth: The Endeavor to Reach the Moon
- Arthur Ashe: Breaking Through Sports Barriers

Rest of the World

- Tearing Down the Barrier between East & West: The Fall of the Berlin Wall
- Building Barriers: The Berlin Wall
- Breaking the Political Barrier: Margaret Thatcher, Britain's First Female Prime Minister
- Beyond the Barriers of the Pole: Amundsen in Antarctica
- Breaking Records: Roger Bannister and the Four Minute Mile
- Breaking Through the Clouds: Edmund Hillary and Mount Everest

19th Century: for sources see guides.lib.uw.edu/research/hd-primary/19th

United States

- Elizabeth Blackwell: Breaking Medicine's Glass Ceiling
- Crossing a Barrier: Roebling and the Brooklyn Bridge
- The Transcontinental Railroad: Crossing Geographic Barriers
- Crossing the Barriers of Time and Place: Samuel Morse and the Telegraph
- Creating Barriers: The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882
- Breaking Down Gender and Racial Barriers: The Creation of Oberlin College
- Attempting to Break the Bonds of Slavery: Denmark Vesey and the Failed Rebellion of 1822

Rest of the World

- Breaking the Barrier of Sakoku: Commodore Perry and Opening the Door to Japan
- Overcoming Disease: Smallpox Vaccination in Victorian England
- Breaking the Barrier of Pain: The Use of Chloroform in 19th Century Obstetrics
- Breaking Racial Barriers: Gandhi's Fight Against Indian Disenfranchisement in South Africa
- Breaking Ground: The Creation of the London Subway System
- Breaking Political Barriers: The Chartist Movement in Great Britain

