

Summary of the 2016 NHD Theme: *Exploration, Encounter, Exchange*

Exploration

- *Exploration likely conjures up visions of travelers setting out on a journey to discover new lands.*
- *Exploration also can be examined in the field of science. Researchers are constantly undertaking scientific explorations to find new medications or possible cures for diseases such as cancer.*
- *The search for new modes of movement has captivated humans since the beginning of recorded time. This form of exploration has resulted in the invention of a variety of vehicles that could make excellent topic choices.*
- *Exploration does not need to be literal—think of exploration as a new idea, concept, or theory that is tested. This idea can come from the fields of politics, economics, or military science.*

Encounter

- *Exploration, of course, almost always leads to encounters—with different peoples, unfamiliar environments, and new ideas. Encounters are often unexpected and unpredictable, and they reveal much about those involved.*
- *Many times encounters involve peoples, plants, and animals that have not previously interacted.*
- *Often exploration leads to occupation or subjugations of other groups of people.*
- *Encounters also occur between familiar parties.*

Exchange

- *It is impossible to make a journey of exploration, encounter new ideas, and not have some ideas exchanged between groups of people.*
- *Encounters can lead to many types of exchanges, whether it be goods, food, ideas, disease, or gunfire.*
- *But exchanges do not happen only in the physical realm. The sharing of ideas, beliefs, and customs can have widespread consequences for the people and cultures involved.*
- *Politics also can be an area of dramatic exchange.*

As you can see, all three elements in this year's theme—exploration, encounter, exchange—are closely related. Try to find examples of each in your chosen topic, though you should note that some topics will lend themselves to focus mainly on one area. You are not required to address all of these elements in your project.

(NHD 2016 Theme Sheet: http://www.nhd.org/wp-content/uploads/2016_ThemeSheet.pdf)