

“Communication in History” Making Meaningful Theme Connections

The strongest theme connections may not be the first thing that comes to your mind. Consider all the ways you can connect a topic to the theme.

	Weak Connection	Strong Connection
There is a difference between “having an opinion” and “communication”	Alice Paul communicated to the world that women should have the right to vote. <i>(Communication is more than just having an opinion. What did she do to change things?)</i>	Alice Paul communicated the need for women’s suffrage through protest. Including picketing the White House, imprisonment, and a hunger strike.
For “thing” topics, go beyond the object and consider how it was used to change history	Jonas Salk communicated hope in the fight against Polio by inventing the first successful vaccine against the disease in 1955. <i>(Just inventing the vaccine isn’t really taking a stand. What did he <u>do</u> with the vaccine?)</i>	After inventing the Polio vaccine in 1955, Jonas Salk communicated the need for better public health through vaccination campaigns and a refusal to patent his invention.
Do more than just repeat the theme words	Rosa Parks communicated by sitting down on the bus. <i>(Take it a step further and go beyond just the physical act of sitting down/standing up.)</i>	Rosa Parks communicated her resistance to segregation through non-violent protest, refusing to give up her seat and inspiring a citywide bus boycott.
Make sure the person/group is doing something on purpose, and not just doing something	Anne Frank communicated by keeping a diary during the Holocaust. <i>(Was writing a diary communicating to others <u>on purpose</u>, or just recoding her experiences?)</i>	Miep Gies opposed the Nazi Holocaust by hiding Anne Frank and her family, saving her diary from destruction and helping to communicate her story to the world.
Try looking for another point of view	By building the biggest ship on the seas at the time, the owners of the <i>Titanic</i> communicated their prestige by challenging the limits of human achievement. <i>(Were they really communicating this, or just trying to make money?)</i>	After the sinking of the <i>Titanic</i> government agencies communicated new rules to ensure public safety, leading to improved shipbuilding and operations, such as the number of lifeboats.
Go beyond just leaders and consider the role of everyday citizens	Many people changed history forever by communicating their opposition to slavery by helping with the Underground Railroad. <i>(This is really general and going to be hard to prove. Is there a specific story to look at?)</i>	Harriet Tubman’s communication of antislavery ideas and support of escaping slaves put her in serious personal danger as she violated the Fugitive Slave Law by leading enslaved people to freedom on the Underground Railroad.
Avoid turning historical figures into heroes or villains	Abraham Lincoln was the greatest president ever for communicating the need to free the slaves with the Emancipation Proclamation. <i>(Historical figures are often not all good or all bad. Make sure not to generalize.)</i>	Abraham Lincoln communicated a partial end to slavery in the United States with the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing only the slaves in the states in rebellion.