Kentucky Sample Topic List

This list represents a sampling of Kentucky topics that students could choose for the 2019 theme “Breaking Barriers.” Listed are potential categories into which each topic may fall. Consider special prizes at both the state and national levels when choosing a topic.

1792 State Constitution: Established the first frontier state and granted suffrage to white men regardless of property. (Political History)

1966 NCAA Championship Game: Texas Western started five black players for the first time in NCAA history against the University of Kentucky. (Civil Rights, Black History, Sports History)

Albert E. Meyzeek: Considered “the most outspoken black leader in Kentucky” at the turn of the century for his fight to provide equal educational opportunities to black students in Louisville. (Education, Civil Rights, Black History)

Alice Allison Dunnigan: The first African American female correspondent to receive White House credentials and the first African American female member of the House and Senate press galleries. (Women’s History, Media, Black History)

bell hooks: hooks is most well known for her works on intersectionality in Queer and Feminist Theory and is considered the architect for modern day Intersectional Feminism. (Literature, LGBTQ History, Black History, Women’s History)

Berea College: The first coeducational and fully integrated college in the Southern United States. (Education, Civil Rights, Women’s History)

Bloody Harlan (1930) and Blackjewel Miners Protest (2019): Coal miner protests about the state of the coal mining industry. (Labor History, Economic, Appalachian History)

Cora Wilson Stewart: The first woman elected as president of the Kentucky Education Association. She also created Moonlight Schools, which sought to end adult illiteracy and received the Pictorial Review’s Annual Achievement Award for the greatest contribution to America by a woman in 1924. (Education, Women’s History)

Frontier Nursing Service: Created by Mary Breckinridge in 1925 in an effort to provide quality healthcare to those living in the Appalachian Mountains of Eastern Kentucky. This service served as a model for rural healthcare for the rest of the United States. (Women’s History, Medical History, Appalachian History)

Georgia Davis Powers: The first woman and first person of color to serve in Kentucky’s senate. (Civil Rights, Women’s History, Political History)

Governor Martha Layne Collins and Toyota of Kentucky: The first wholly owned automobile manufacturing facility of Toyota in the United States brought to Kentucky by the first and only female Governor. (Women’s History, Economic, Political History, International Relations)
Jane Todd Crawford and Dr. Ephraim McDowell: In 1809, Crawford rode 60 miles on horseback to Dr. McDowell’s medical office in Danville to have the first successful abdominal surgery to remove a 22-pound ovarian tumor. (Medical History, Women’s History, STEM)

John E. Fryer, M.D.: Fryer, a psychiatrist and gay rights activist, delivered a speech at the American Psychiatric Association annual conference in 1972 that led to the removal of homosexuality as a mental illness from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM). (LGBTQ History, Medical History, Activism)

Kentucky Civil Rights Act of 1966: The first act in the South that established enforcement powers over civil right violations at the state level. (Civil Right, Political History)

Laura Clay: Clay was co-founder and the first president of the Kentucky Equal Rights Association and is considered by historians as one of the most influential women in the South advocating for suffrage. (Women’s Rights, Activism, Political History)

Loretta Lynn: Lynn wrote boundary-pushing songs about her experiences as a woman living in Appalachia. Her most controversial songs were about contraception, alcoholism, war, and divorce, all topics avoided by other artists during the 1960s. (Activism, Appalachian History, Music History, Women’s History)

Marianne Barnes: The first female Master Distiller since Prohibition. (Women’s History, Economic, STEM)

Muhammad Ali: Ali is known for his skills in the boxing ring as well as his public resistance to the Vietnam War draft based on his religious and moral convictions. (Black History, Religion, Sports History, Civil Rights)

Nat Northington: The first African American to play football in the SEC as a member of the University of Kentucky 1967 football team. (Black History, Civil Rights, Sports History)

Penny Chenery: Chenery was the first woman admitted as a member of the Jockey Club and bred and owned Secretariat, the 1973 winner of the Triple Crown. (Women’s History, Sports History)

Rufus B. Atwood: Under Atwood’s presidency, Kentucky State University became an officially accredited university. (Education, Black History)

The Wades and Bradens: The Bradens, a white couple, assisted in the purchasing of a home for the Wades, a black couple, in a segregated Louisville suburb. (Civil Rights, Activism)

Willa Brown: The first African American woman to earn a pilot license and a commercial license in the United States. (Women’s History, Black History)

William Wells Brown: First published African American playwright, an abolitionist lecturer, novelist, and historian, who was born into enslavement. (Civil Rights, Literature, Black History, Activism)
Potential Online Resources:

- **Kentucky Historical Society:**
  - Artifact Catalog [https://history.ky.gov/resources/catalogs-research-tools/artifacts-catalog/](https://history.ky.gov/resources/catalogs-research-tools/artifacts-catalog/)

- **Kentucky Civil War Governors Project:** [http://civilwargovernors.org/](http://civilwargovernors.org/). Learn more about Kentucky’s Civil War Governor’s at this website. Includes some teacher resources.

- **Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History:** [https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/](https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/). Explore the University of Kentucky’s many oral histories that cover a range of content areas and time periods, such as Appalachia, sports, education, the Korean War, and more.

- **The University of Louisville Digital Collections:** [http://digital.library.louisville.edu/](http://digital.library.louisville.edu/). The University of Louisville has an extensive collection of photographs and other sources featuring Kentucky history and more.

- **Filson Historical Society:** [http://filson.pastperfectonline.com/](http://filson.pastperfectonline.com/). The Filson Historical Society is beginning to expand their digitization efforts with more and more images and documents related to Kentucky’s history now available on their website.