HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Consider that everything in history is a puzzle. The events that happen are a careful fit to the others surrounding it. Therefore, you cannot fully understand one piece of history without thinking about its context. Historical context is the “Big Picture” or the people, places, ideas, and events that happen before, during, and after the topic you are examining. Think about your topic and fill in the chart below.

Main events occurring before my topic:
What caused your topic to happen? Why did it happen?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

What people, ideas, or events took place at the same time that were related to your topic?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

What long term changes took place because of your topic?
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________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Why was your topic significant in history?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Your Topic
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Main timeframe of topic
________________________________________________________________________
Major location(s)
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
How was the setting significant to your topic?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

What were the immediate results of your topic? What impact did it have?
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________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
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Adapted and used with permission from National History Day in Iowa.