

Name: _____

Topic: _____

≡ DUE: FRI.
- DEC. 18

Period: _____

WHAT IS A THESIS STATEMENT AND HOW DO I CREATE ONE?

A thesis statement expresses the main point, or *argument*, of your NHD project. In much the same way that an attorney presents evidence to support a case in court, your thesis statement makes an argument based upon historical evidence. The evidence comes from the primary and secondary sources you discovered during your research. A strong thesis statement does four things:

1. Communicates your central argument (main point)
2. Shows how your topic connects to the annual theme
3. Situates your topic in time, place (historical context)
4. States the historical significance of your topic (why is this important)

In addition to a unifying thesis, your project should also present plenty of historical evidence, discuss differing points of view on the topic, and present your analysis and interpretation of the historical data.

Use the following frameworks to help create your own thesis statement.

ANNUAL THEME: EXPLORATION, ENCOUNTER, EXCHANGE IN HISTORY

Try to find examples of each in your topic, although some topics will lend themselves to focus more on one or two areas. You are not required to address all three elements in your project.

Connect your topic to Exploration: _____

Connect your topic to Encounter: _____

Connect your topic to Exchange: _____

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: When did this happen? What else was going on at that time? What was the status quo? How does your topic relate to this context?

SIGNIFICANCE IN HISTORY: Why is this topic important? Why should we care? What were the short-term consequences? What was the long-term significance? How did this topic change history?

Thesis Statement Sentence Frames

At a time when [historical context]: _____

[My Topic] engaged in exploration/encounter/exchange in these ways: _____

These encounters/exchanges/explorations resulted in the following: _____

This is significant because: _____

Thesis Statement Examples

At a time when blacks in Mississippi were not allowed to vote, and Freedom Summer set the stage for revolutionary changes, Fannie Lou Hamer showed leadership by helping to found the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party in 1964 and giving a memorably passionate speech at the convention. Although there were early failures and it was an arduous journey, Hamer's leadership helped result in the Civil Rights Act of 1965. Hamer's leadership resulted in a legacy of voting and political empowerment for black Mississippians.

Beginning in 1517, Martin Luther sparked resistance against Roman Catholic religious practices, especially the sale of indulgences, corruption, and the emphasis on salvation through good works. Luther's Reformation ignited a religious revolution, created a new sect of Christianity, and later brought change to the Roman Catholic Church.

Under the banner "Reform, Freedom, Law and Justice," Emilio Zapata commanded revolutionary forces in southern Mexico to uplift agrarian peasants through land reform. Zapata's role in the Mexican Revolution helped foster a new constitution in 1917. This was later used to redistribute property to the nation's rural poor.

In response to the stock market crash of 1929, President Franklin D. Roosevelt initiated a revolutionary "New Deal." This government reaction brought reform to the U.S. banking system and helped get Americans back to work. Roosevelt's goal of restoring economic stability would go unmet, however, until the country mobilized for war.

Following World War I, Adolph Hitler blamed Germany's hardships on the country's Jewish population, fostering a genocide later known as the Holocaust. International reaction to the atrocities of World War II led to a reform of the Geneva Convention in 1949 to include the protection of civilian persons in times of war. The Fourth Geneva Convention laid the groundwork for international humanitarian law and is used to regulate and enforce wartime crimes even today.

Beginning in 1944, Dr. Norman Borlaug conducted research surrounding disease-resistant wheat varieties. His successes in agricultural reform sparked the Green Revolution in several developing nations then struggling with starvation. Reaction to Borlaug's work has been mixed as the farming practices have accomplished higher yields while also undermining small-scale farms and presenting negative environmental impacts.