

THESIS

Writing a Thesis
Working Your Thesis



Writing a Thesis

- ✓ NHD projects should do more than just tell a story. They should make a specific point (thesis) about its topic.
- ✓ Your thesis statement is the foundation of your project.
- ✓ You must develop your own argument of historical impact of the person, event, pattern or idea you are targeting.
- ✓ Thesis is not the topic, rather it explains what you believe to be the impact and significance of your topic in history.
- ✓ A thesis is an argument... YOUR ARGUMENT! It presents a point that YOU want to prove about your topic. It shows YOUR opinion, beliefs and analysis about this issue.
- ✓ A good thesis statement...
 - Addresses a narrow topic that interests you.
 - Connects that topic with the theme.
 - Presents a clear, original, and interesting argument.
 - Can be proven or supported by your research.
 - Introduces the arguments you will use to support your claim.
 - Is easy to understand even for someone who knows nothing about your topic.
- ✓ Your thesis should involve a cause and effect relationship, showing how your topic affected history.

The History Happens Thesis Test

1. **Does my thesis include a topic (who, a person or thing; when; and where)?** Don't assume the audience knows these answers. The who/when/where can be the same word or phrase in the thesis!
2. **Have I taken a specific/narrow position that others might challenge or oppose?** If your thesis simply states facts that no one would, or could, disagree with, it's just a book report and not an argument. If it is too broad, it becomes more difficult for a strong argument, especially in a narrow time frame or word limit.
3. **Is the theme clearly stated?** The theme word or words should be evident in your thesis. Use both words if the theme is an "and" or "or" theme!
4. **Does my thesis state the after (impact)?** Show that you know what resulted because of your topic.
5. **Does my thesis answer "so what" "why should we care?"** It is important to show the complete relationship - what caused "it" and what "it" caused!



Hints and Tips

6. **Does my thesis state the before (context)?** Show that you know what caused this to happen. This is optional but may help your reader get up to speed.

7. **Does my thesis include phrases showing causation?** One of the best ways to put together a solid thesis is to use phrases such as "this happened because of this" or "they did this by taking advantage of this" or "this ended with the help of this and that."

Thesis Critical Element Hunt

One of the most devastating defeats in British History, the Gallipoli Campaign of World War One left a massive scar on the British Crown; determined to not repeat that tragedy^{2,3}, the Allied Powers¹ rectified the planning, secrecy, and multi-military cooperation⁴ that Gallipoli lacked⁶ to triumph³ with World War II's Invasion of Normandy^{5,7}.

By leveraging compromise³ to manage conflict³ and intentionally starting conflict³ to achieve compromise^{2,3,7}, James K. Polk¹ created the iconic shape of the United States and expanded our reach from sea to shining sea⁴, laying the foundation of our new nation's economic stability⁵.

Thesis Organizer

WHO is your who?
WHERE did your topic take place?
WHEN did your topic take place?
WHAT are you trying to prove?
HOW is this related to the theme?
WHAT is the impact – what resulted because of your topic?
WHY do we care – answer “so what” and the long-term impact?
WHAT was happening then that made “the atmosphere ripe?”
ANSWER “this happened in order for that to happen” or “this happened because of that” or “by doing this, that happened.”

Working Your Thesis

Place your thesis on an index card –

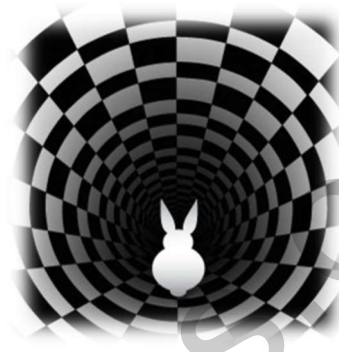
This index card is gold!

- ✓ Use it to focus your research
 - Stay on topic
 - Beware of rabbit holes
 - If it doesn't fit or fix your thesis, keep moving

- ✓ Use it to organize your findings
 - Separate your research based on the thesis elements

- ✓ Use it to build your project
 - ALL 7 ELEMENTS will be highlighted in your project

- ✓ Use it to prepare for the judges' interview
 - Practice answering questions for each element.



Thesis Integration

Each segment of your thesis should be supported by research.

Organize your project by laying out each segment of your thesis and **proving** each with several pieces of research!

