

## National History Day Thesis Statements

### DEVELOP A THESIS STATEMENT

NHD projects should do more than just tell a story. Every exhibit, performance, documentary, paper and website should make a point about its topic. To do this, you must develop your own argument of the historical impact of the person, event, pattern or idea you are studying. The point you make is called a thesis statement. A thesis statement is not the same as a topic. Your thesis statement explains what you believe to be the impact and significance of your topic in history. Example:

Topic: Battle of Gettysburg

Thesis Statement: The battle of Gettysburg was a major turning point of the Civil War. It turned the tide of the war from the South to the North, pushing back Lee's army that would never fight again on Northern soil and bringing confidence to the Union army.

Tip: In order to write a successful thesis statement:

- Avoid burying a great thesis statement in the middle of a paragraph or late in the paper.
- Be as clear and as specific as possible; avoid vague words.
- Indicate the point of your paper but avoid sentence structures like, "The point of my paper is..."

Is your thesis statement too general?

Your thesis should be limited to what can be accomplished in the specified number of pages. Shape your topic so that you can get straight to the "meat" of it. Being specific in your paper will be much more successful than writing about general things that do not say much. Don't settle for three pages of just skimming the surface.

## The Formula

Although most politicians support ongoing funding for the DEA,  
counter argument (opposite of your opinion)

the war on drugs + is a travesty of justice  
Subject Opinion

because sentencing laws are discriminatory, more prisons than colleges are built,  
reason 1 reason 2  
and addiction is treated as a crime rather than a disease.  
reason 3