How to Write a NHD Thesis Statement

A thesis statement is a central thought that holds your entire National History Day (NHD) project together. You’ll craft your thesis statement as an answer to your “research question.” In the beginning, we like to refer to your thesis as a “working thesis”, because as you gather your research, this statement can evolve. By the time you present your NHD project, however, you should have a concrete thesis that is supported by evidence.

Thesis = Topic + Theme + Impact. In other words, you are not just introducing your topic, you are creating an argument that expresses your topic’s significance and demonstrates how the theme plays a central part. You are writing a statement that answers your research question. The examples provided below are based on a past theme: **Turning Points in History: People, Ideas, Events**.

# Sample Statements: Do’s and Don’ts

DISCLAIMER: Even the “DO” statements are a work in progress.

Don’t: Martin Luther was an important person and the Protestant Reformation was turning point in history.

Do: Martin Luther disagreed with aspects of Roman Catholic religious practices, especially the sale of indulgences, religious corruption, and the emphasis on salvation through good works. He reacted to these practices by posting and distributing his 95 theses. This turning point sparked a religious movement which ultimately creating a new sect and led to the reformation of the Roman Catholic Church.

Don’t: The Indians and the whites had a hard time getting along during settlement of the American colonies.

Do: Puritan expansion and Indian tolerance in New England reached a turning point when King Philip’s War broke out between the two groups in reaction to the pressure white expansion brought to American Indians. Costly and brutal, King Philip’s War brought an end to native resistance to white expansion in New England but also impeded white expansion due to the significant loss of property and life among both groups.

Don’t: Women deserved the right to vote when they earned it in 1920.

Do: Reflecting the desire of women to have a voice in government, the woman’s suffrage movement and the eventual passage of the 19th amendment brought about a turning point in government and politics in the United States.