

## Thesis Development I - Laying the Foundation

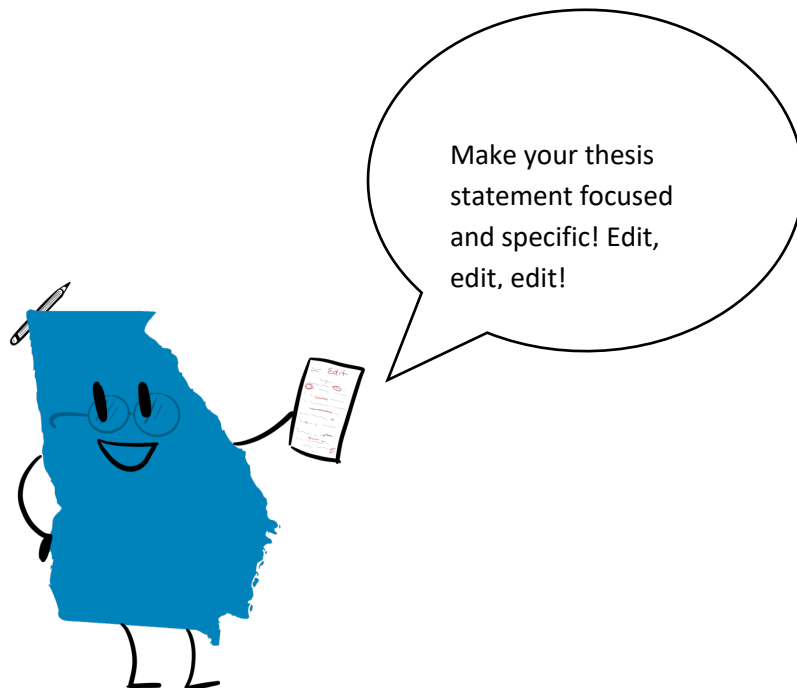
With a National History Day project your ultimate goal is to make an argument, related to the theme, and clearly making a case about the significance of your topic to history. This argument is known as your thesis statement, it is the **central focus of your entire National History Day project**. It is the result of the analysis of your research and the quest for answers to your research questions.

### Thesis Statements

Regardless of the category you eventually decide upon, your thesis statement, your argument, must be the centerpiece of your work. You will want your thesis statement to be a part of the introduction and conclusion of a paper, website, performance or documentary, the clear and central to your exhibit. It is the essential point you want to make through your work!

You must use your thesis statement as a guide to the construction of your project. **Every component of your project MUST support your thesis!**

Writing a thesis statement can be challenging, hard work. You'll want to edit, revise and rewrite your thesis statement throughout. Use the worksheet included in this packet to help you get started but remember: **effective scholars and writers revise their work throughout the process!**



Remember your **research questions!** They can help when developing your thesis statement. The answers to your research questions can be the basis for a good thesis statement.

| RESEARCH QUESTIONS   | SAMPLE THESIS   |
|--|---|
| Why did Rosa Parks refuse to give up her seat on the bus? What other events were going on in the Civil Rights Movement? What impact did her actions have on the Civil Rights movement? | In 1955, Rosa Parks was arrested when she refused to give up her bus seat to a white passenger in Montgomery, Alabama. In response, Martin Luther King, Jr. led activists and the African American people of Montgomery through a 381 day bus boycott, which resulted in a triumphant Supreme Court battle for desegregation. |



### **Remember your theme connection!**

As you are thinking about developing your thesis statement, remember to think again about the theme. The strongest National History Day projects will weave the central ideas of the theme into the thesis as well as the project.

Try to get the key words of the theme into your thesis and consider using them in your section headings to text. You can use variations of the theme words because what's most important is that the concepts, the ideas of the theme are in your project.

### **Historical Context**

Your topic did not occur in a vacuum. Nothing in history ever does. Everything that happened in history did so in a world full of forces influencing/interacting with your topic. Understanding that context and effectively communicating it is critical to a successful History Day project.

Remember, the environment, the context is fundamental to your topic and you want to do your best to understand it.

Remember too that a thorough understanding of your topic's historical context will make your argument for the significance of your topic to history more powerful.



# **WORKSHEET: THESIS STATEMENTS**

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**Topic:** \_\_\_\_\_

**WHO:** Who was involved? Who was affected?

**WHAT:** What happened? What was the main event?

**WHERE:** Where was/where the place/s took place?

**WHEN:** When did it happen? How long of a time period was it?

**WHY:** Why did it happen? What caused it?

## **THEME CONNECTION: TURNING POINTS IN HISTORY**

Now, put it together into a working thesis statement

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