**Pointers for Writing a Thesis for your History Fair Project**

The largest DBQ you will ever write. Until next year.

1. Know your topic/research area - If you still aren’t certain, research some more!
2. Finalize your title and write it down

The title of your project is very important because it can/will help you formulate your thesis statement and will create interest for your ideas. In developing your title, you should include the person, idea, or event that is the focus of the year’s theme but also make an interesting or memorable connection. It should not be simply stating your topic of study. (Non-example: Theodora / Example: Theodora: The Woman Who Shaped an Empire)

1. Write your thesis statement-paragraph - It is the statement that explains what you are proving in your project.

A thesis statement is not just a fact, it is your *argument*. Every project should have an argument about its topic and everyone who reads your opening paragraph should be able to clearly identify your thesis statement/argument.

Include contextualization to set the stage for your ideas. Keep your word count to 100 words or less due to word limitations on most projects. Treat this like an LEQ or DBQ.

How do I know if my thesis is strong?

* *Did I answer the question?* Re-reading the history fair theme after constructing a working thesis can help you fix an argument that misses the focus of the question.
* *Have I taken a position that others might challenge or oppose?* If your thesis simply states facts that no one would, or even could, disagree with, it's possible that you are simply providing a summary, rather than making an argument.
* *Is my thesis statement specific enough?* If a reader's first response is "how?" or "why?" your thesis may be too open-ended and lack guidance for the reader. See what you can add to give the reader a better take on your position right from the beginning. What is specifically important?
* *Does my thesis pass the "So what?" test?* If a reader's first response is, "So what?" then you need to clarify, forge a relationship, or connect to a larger issue.
* *Does my project support my thesis specifically and without wandering?* If your thesis and the body of your project do not seem to go together, one of them has to change. It's OK to change your working thesis to reflect things you have figured out in the course of your research. It is a good idea to continuously reassess and revise your writing.

*THESIS EXAMPLE (From an “US History approved” topic.)*

*Topic of research: George Washington*

*Title: George Washington: A Model of Leadership*

*Thesis: Not many men find “something calming” in the sound of bullets whizzing past their heads. However, when George Washington made this claim, people believed him. He possessed a rare combination of talents essential to uniting a country in times of both conflict and compromise. His powerful and unusual leadership style steered a divided and violent group of colonies through two bloody wars and buoyed a fledgling country through the quagmire of an emerging democracy. His leadership abilities have inspired and influenced thousands of later statesmen who modeled his persistence, moral compass, and thoughtful statesmanship. (94 words)*

**Title and Thesis Submission**

*Directions: One submission per group. If you cannot find time to discuss this info together, it is a bad omen for creating your project. Please* ***type*** *your submission in the following format. Use the example provided on George Washington for further clarification.*

Name(s) and #(s):

Topic of research:

Title:

Thesis (and word count):

**Below is the rubric that will be used to grade your submission:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **TITLE/THESIS** | **4** | **2** | **.5** |  |
| **Title** | Title addresses topic of the project with a phrase or idea that draws the attention to the significance within the theme. | Title addresses topic of the project but requires minor revision to be more dynamic or clear. | Simple title that reiterates the topic of research |  |
| **Contextualization** | Project relates thesis to broader historical events, developments or processes that occur before, during, or continue after the time-frame of the topic. | Contextualization connects thesis to broader historical events, developments but requires revision to be effective. | Contextualization does not match the topic of study or does not help to clarify the topic of research. |  |
| **Theme** | Thesis clearly responds to the annual theme.  | Thesis needs minor revision to respond to the annual theme.  | Thesis does not adequately address the significance of the topic within the annual theme. |  |
| **Argumentation** | Thesis makes a strong argument and provides clear direction for project. Ample evidence is provided to support claim(s). | Thesis makes an argument but requires revision to provide adequate direction for project. | Thesis is not specific enough to provide structure for an NHD project or inadequate evidence is provided. |  |
| **Grammar** | Attention is paid to mechanics, grammar and spelling | Minor spelling, grammar and/or mechanics issues | Numerous spelling, grammar and/or mechanics issues throughout |  |
|  | *You may resubmit your assignment for credit* |  | **Score** | /20 |