**How do I know if my thesis is strong?**

As you begin the process of creating the thesis, or argument, you will make (and prove) with your history fair project, ask yourself the following questions:

* ***Have I taken a position that others might challenge or oppose?*** Your thesis statement is an argument, not a book report about your topic.If your thesis is simply a list of 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?*** Thesis statements that are too vague often do not have a strong argument. If your thesis contains words like "good" or "successful," see if you could be more specific: *why* is something "good"; *what specifically* makes something "successful"? etc.
* ***Do I connect my topic to the theme?*** Look at the theme again after constructing a working thesis to avoid crafting an argument that misses the focus of the theme.
* ***Does my thesis place my topic in historical context?*** Does my thesis statement acknowledge events during and leading up to your topic? (set the stage)
* ***Does my thesis demonstrate the impact my topic had on history and why it mattered?*** This should be the main part of your thesis statement. Your argument should be centered around why your topic mattered in history, what impact it had and the legacy that endures because of it. Once again, not simply a list of facts, but an argument where you take a position.
* ***Does my thesis pass the "So what?" test?*** If a reader's first response is, "So what?" then you need to clarify, to forge a relationship, or to connect to a larger issue and significance.
* ***Does my thesis pass the "how and why?" test?*** 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.
* ***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 o.k. to change your working thesis to reflect things you have figured out in the course of creating your project.

**If you like math, think of the process of building your thesis statement as the following formula:**

**TOPIC + THEME + IMPACT = THESIS**

**1st sentence:** Should introduce your topic, state what it is and/or provide basic historical context for your topic.

**2nd sentence:** Should provide a statement arguing a connection between your topic and the theme.

**3rd sentence:** Should state an argument for the lasting impact and legacy of your topic (why it mattered).

**Thesis Statement Examples**

“Nadia Comaneci’s Perfect 10”

(*THEME: Revolution, Reaction and Reform in History*)

In the 1976 Summer Olympics Nadia Comaneci scored a perfect 10.0 in women’s floor gymnastics. The strong and mixed reactions to Nadia’s performance led to a revolutionary movement in women’s gymnastics that granted the sport international appeal, increased the level of competition between gymnasts and enhanced the difficulty of the skills necessary to score competitively at gymnastics competitions. The lasting impact of Nadia Comaneci’s achievement would alter the very nature of women’s gymnastics, reforming the sport from within to accommodate Nadia’s incredible achievement.

“The Declaration of Independence”

(*THEME: Rights and Responsibilities in History*)

The ratification of the Declaration of Independence by the Second Continental Congress on July 4th 1776 forged the cornerstone for liberty and freedom in the modern world. Although the product of but one nation, the Declaration of Independence laid the foundation for all modern democracies by defining the rights of humanity, the responsibilities and limitations of government and the nature of freedom itself. The legacy of this influential document transformed nations, liberated minorities and continues to inspire liberty to this day.

 “Rosa Parks”

(*THEME: Rights and Responsibilities in History*)

On December 1st, 1955 the American South was steeped in prejudice and laws promoting racial inequality. In spite of this, Rosa Parks refused to give up her bus seat to a white passenger igniting a national debate on the rights of colored people in America. Her assertion of this right not only led to the desegregation of public transportation in Montgomery, AL, but became a rallying cry for the rights of all colored Americans and reminder to national leaders of their responsibility to act on behalf of all American citizens.