**Thesis Statement Checklist**

* The 5 W’s
  + **Who?** Who is involved? What is the person’s nationality and profession? Who are the major players? Are there two sides involved? BE SPECIFIC.
  + **What?** What happened? Address the specifics of your NARROWED topic. BE SPECIFIC.
  + **Where?** Where did this take place? In the U.S.? In the global political arena? BE SPECIFIC
  + **When?** What year did your topic take place? During what important eras? For example, did your event occur during World War I, the Vietname War. BE SPECIFIC.
  + **Why?** Why did this happen? Were there economic or political tensions? Were the issue regarding equality? BE SPECIFIC.
* Theme: *Triumph & Tragedy*
  + Make sure you use the theme words in your thesis. Bold them, underline them, italicize them, but draw the judges’ eyes to them. Remember, you don’t have to pay equal attention to both elements of the theme.
* Topic: What is your topic? Is it narrow enough? Is it too narrow? Ask yourself, for example, can I address this topic in 500 student-generated words on an exhibit board? If not, is it too much or too little? Use the topic narrowing triangle:

**\*\*Narrow as much or as little as you need!**

Interest: World War II

Theme: Triumph & Tragedy

Broad Topic:

Concentration Camps

Narrow:

Otto Frank triumphing over tragedy and publishing

Anne’s diary.

* Impacts
  + Short-Term: What happened immediately after your event?
  + Long-Term: What do we care today? So what? How does this impact change our lives today, either directly or indirectly? **This is the piece that will help shape your argument, and take your thesis statement from good to great!**

\*\*REMEMBER: Most thesis statements are 3-5 sentences. The last one or two sentences will be the substance of your argument, but incorporating all the above elements is important!

**Thesis Statement Checklist**

**Example:**

In 1947, post-World War II (WWII) Europe Saw the growing threat of communism and declining economies. This economic and political environment caused President Harry Truman and Secretary of State George Marshall to devise the European Recovery Plan, or ERP. The ERP was an economic stimulus program that injected over $13 billion into the struggling economies of Western Europe. This program, now referred to as the **“Marshall Plan,”** marked a *turning point* in American foreign policy. It was a reversal from post-World War I (WWI) isolationism and generated long-lasting relations with other nations.

-Alexander Weissman

2013 National Junior Paper Gold Medalist

* The 5 W’s
  + **Who?** President Harry Truman, Secretary of State George Marshall, United States, Western Europe. Notice how all the major players are specifically identified. Notice how titles are included to help identify specific people.
  + **What?** The European Recovery Plan (ERP), later know as the Marshall Plan.
  + **Where?** The United States and Western Europe—Money is coming from the U.S. and being injected into Western European economies.
  + **When?** In 1947, post-World War II Europe.
  + **Why?** To inject money into the struggling economies of Western Europe.
* *Theme:* The theme in 2013 was *Turning Points in History.* Alexander says, “This program, now referred to as the “Marshall Plan,” marked a **turning point** in American foreign policy.
* **Topic**: Alexander clearly narrowed his topic from a general interest in the consequences of WWII, and the broad topic of post-war economics before he landed on the Marshall Plan.

Interest: Post-World War II

Theme: Turning Points in History

Broad Topic:

Post-War Economics

Narrow:

Marshall Plan

* Impacts
  + Short Term: What happened immediately after?

“*It was a reversal from post-World War I (WWI) isolationism…”*

* + Long-Term: Why do we care about it today? So what?

*“…generated long-lasting relations with other nations.”*