

The History Fair Thesis: What's it all about?

A History Fair project is not a regular school project where you report back what you learned. Instead, YOU ask a “how and why” question about history that you want to answer. Then you do the research using primary and secondary sources, and then tell us what you think!

That answer to your question is called a thesis.

1. Put check marks next to the four best elements of a History Fair thesis:

- Makes a historical argument, takes a stand
- Contains a citation
- Shows historical significance or suggests change over time
- Has a narrow and specific focus
- Summarizes important facts on the topic
- Can be proven with evidence
- Asks a historical research question

2. Read these statements about the reformers during the Progressive Era:

- A. Playgrounds and Progressive Era Reformers
- B. Progressive era reformers believed that poor children had a “right to a childhood” and built playgrounds to improve their lives.
- C. Progressive reformers started playgrounds in schools and organized activities in parks’ field houses to provide safe places for children to play.
- D. Reformers of the Playground Movement during the Progressive era took children out of the alleys and into safe, organized playgrounds and park field houses. They not only brought recreation to the city’s children, but also sought to establish cooperative morals and order among the working class.

Now, match the statements with these descriptions:

_____ is a brief heading on a broad theme. It is not a thesis statement at all.

_____ is a strong thesis statement that makes an argument which can be backed up by evidence and is historically significant.

_____ is a descriptive statement that gives information.

_____ is a weak thesis statement. It makes such a general argument that it might be hard to find evidence.



3. Cross out the primary source that would not be used with the Playgrounds and the Progressives thesis:



Chicago History Museum IChi-000810



Chicago History Museum DN-0006437



Chicago History Museum DN-0000072



Chicago History Museum IChi-068151

4. Write a caption based on the three primary source images you selected.
