**Thesis Checklist**

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| **Your basic opinion + how or why you think that = thesis statement** |

A successful thesis:

* Sums up what you are going to say and puts your point in a nutshell
* Makes an opinionated argument with which a reasonable adult could disagree
* Goes beyond stating the essay’s topic to make an **argument** about that topic, giving you something to prove, back up, and develop
* Answers the questions “how” and/or “why”
* Provides a “map” of the claims that you will use to prove your thesis; in other words, outlines the reasons that you will introduce to support your thesis
* Is neither too broad nor too narrow for the scope of the assignment
* Is not an obvious statement (e.g. “Friends are good” or “War is destructive”)
* **Establishes a contract between you and your readers. Readers can expect that your entire paper will be on this thesis, and that you’ll support it interestingly and convincingly.**
* Is NOT a question

Bearing the checklist in mind, evaluate what is wrong with each of the following potential thesis statements. Be prepared to share what’s wrong. Then, revise the theses to make them useable.

1. Richard Nixon was the first President of the United States to resign.
2. This is an examination of the benefits of Penicillin.
3. In this essay I am going to talk about the problems faced by ex-prisoners returning to society.
4. Have you ever wondered why most people read much more slowly than they need to?
5. Unemployment is a serious problem in today’s world.