Thesis Development Worksheet

TOPIC: ____________________________________________________________

WHO: Who was involved? Who was affected? __________________________

WHAT: What happened? What was the main event? ______________________

WHERE: Where was/were the place(s) it took place? _____________________

WHEN: When did it happen? How long of a time period was it? __________

WHY: Why did it happen? What caused it? _____________________________

WHY: Why is it important? What were outcomes? _______________________

CONNECTION TO THEME: __________________

How were rights and responsibilities connected to your topic? __________

What was the impact or historical significance of your topic? __________

Put it all together into a thesis statement.
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

Can you prove it? _________________________________________________

How? Explain. ____________________________________________________
Thesis Development Example

TOPIC: Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott

WHO: Who was involved? Who was affected? Rosa Parks; citizens in Montgomery, Alabama; civil rights leaders, Montgomery’s city government officials.

WHAT: What happened? What was the main event? Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a public bus, which violated a city law requiring segregation. She was arrested and went to jail. Civil rights leaders organized a boycott of city buses to challenge the law as unconstitutional. The economic impact of the boycott forced city leaders and the bus company to enter into negotiation with civil rights leaders.

WHERE: Where was/were the place(s) it took place? Montgomery, Alabama

WHEN: When did it happen? How long of a time period was it? Parks was arrested on Dec. 1, 1955; the boycott started on Dec. 5 and lasted for 382 days.

WHY: Why did it happen? What caused it? Civil rights leaders wanted to overturn segregation laws.

WHY: Why is it important? What were the outcomes? The boycott forced debate over the issue and succeeded in overturning the law requiring segregation. This success inspired similar protests helping end segregation and secure greater equality.

CONNECTION TO THEME: Rights and Responsibilies in History

What was revolutionary/a reaction/a reform about your topic? Rosa Parks and other Montgomery community members desired reform of the segregated bus system. As a reaction to her arrest, advocates for civil rights challenged segregation as unconstitutional while city leaders and citizen groups stood behind the Montgomery law that preserved segregation on public transportation.

What was the impact of historical significance of your topic? The economic impact of the boycott succeeded in forcing the bus company and city leaders to reform the established laws and end segregation in the Montgomery Bus System. Consequently, civil rights advocates around the country were inspired to take similar non-violent action.

Put it all together into a thesis statement. Wanting reform to the segregated Montgomery Bus System, Rosa Parks was arrested for violating the Jim Crow Laws. Black residents of Montgomery and the NAACP reacted by boycotting the buses for 382 days leading to financial problems for the bus company and the eventual end of bus segregation. This boycott inspired similar protests helping end segregation, sparking the modern Civil Rights Movement, and securing greater equality for African Americans across the United States.

Can you prove it? Yes

How? Explain: City officials and the bus company refused to come to a compromise over segregation on buses until the boycott made a significant financial impact. Other civil rights leaders sent letters and requests to boycott participants seeking advice to start similar protests. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. used what he learned in Montgomery and applied it in other cities. These are documented in meeting minutes, testimonials, newspaper articles, letters, speeches, and a timeline of events.