Thesis Statement Checklist
www.newfane.wnyric.org/.../domain/49/Hero_thesis_statement.doc
Accessed 9/26/16

Does your thesis “do” these things?

☐ It should NOT be vague, but should clearly express what the essay is about.
  ○ (your person)

☐ It should NOT be factual information, but make a discussable/arguable point.
  ○ (that your person should be considered a modern day hero)

☐ It should NOT start with, “In this essay I will...”, but indicate the structure of the essay.
  ○ (what you’ll include/talk about to show why your person is a hero)

Example:
“Timothy Treadwell is considered a modern day hero for his work as an environmentalist and his hands-on effort to protect the Alaskan brown bear.”

This thesis statement clearly (1) expresses what the essay is about [Timothy Treadwell], gives a topic that can be (2) discussed and argued [that he is a modern day hero], and (3) indicates the structure of the essay [that he’s a hero because of his environmentalist work and his work of protecting brown bears].

☐ Do I answer the question? Re-reading the question prompt after constructing a working thesis can help you fix an argument that has missed the focus of the question.

☐ Have I taken a position that others might challenge or oppose? If your thesis simply states facts that no one 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.

☐ Does my thesis pass the “So what?” test? If a reader’s first response after reading your thesis statement is, “So what?”, then you need to clarify or connect to a larger issue.

☐ Does my thesis pass the “How?” and “Why?” tests? If a reader’s first response after reading your thesis statement 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 what your position is in the paper.