THESIS STATEMENT CHECKLIST

A successful thesis:

- Give you something to prove, back up, develop
- Sums up what you are going to say (put in a nutshell)
- Is neither too broad or too narrow for the scope of the assignment
- Does more than state a well-known fact—usually makes an arguable assertion of some kind
- Establishes a contract between you and your readers. They can expect that you’ll support this thesis convincingly and interestingly and that you will not be bothering them with extraneous information
- May suggest an organization to the essay

Bearing these criteria in mind, decide what is wrong with each of the following as potential thesis statements:

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