

**Book One: *They Say, I Say* Second Edition by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein**

The purpose of this book is to look at effective argument writing. **Read Chapters 1-10 of this book.** Then, on a separate sheet of paper, answer the following questions in complete, well-crafted sentences. Please note that the questions are based on the *content* and *ideas* of the text; therefore, the answers must also be based on the ideas of the authors of the book, Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein. These questions are **NOT** to be answered based on your opinion or others' ideas.

This assignment is worth a total of 21 points; each question has the number of points assigned to it identified in brackets at the end of the question. Let the number guide you with the number of answers expected for each question. For example, if a question has a [2] at the end, it means it is worth 2 points and requires a two-part answer.

**On the first day of school**, the answers to these questions will be collected and scored.

1. How does a writer "keep an audience engaged"? (Chapter One) [1 point]
2. Other than stating someone else's view, name two other "powerful ways to begin" an essay (Chapter One). [2 points]
3. What is a "list summary"? (Chapter Two). [1 point]
4. Describe the "quotation sandwich" used to frame a quotation effectively (Chapter Three). [3 points]
5. How should quotations *not* be introduced? Give an example (Chapter Three). [1 point]
6. Besides stating that one disagrees with a particular view, what else should one "offer"? In addition, when agreeing, how might one state his or her opinion in a "new" and "fresh" manner? (Chapter Four) [2 points]
7. Why is it important to "pay attention to voice markers" in writing? (Chapter Five) [1 point]
8. What is the effect of "anticipating objections" to your position in argumentative writing? (Chapter Six). [1 point]
9. What is the difference between answering the "who cares?" question and the "so what?" question? (Chapter Seven) [1 point]
10. Where are transitions usually placed? Give an example of transitional words that indicate elaboration, comparison, contrast and cause and effect (Chapter Eight). [5 points]
11. What *type of language* do "many successful writers" use in their writing according to Graff and Birkenstein? (Chapter Nine). [2 points]
12. What is metacommentary? (Chapter Ten). [1 point]

**Book Two: *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne**

All Honors American Literature and Composition students will read *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne, complete ***The Scarlet Letter* Literary Chart**, track five specific topics/ideas throughout the novel, and compose THREE thematic statements (using the template provided) for **three** of the five topics/ideas. Much support information has been provided to aid you in this endeavor—please read it carefully.

The **assessment** of the Summer Reading Assignment for this novel has three parts: an objective test, a literary/rhetorical devices chart, and a timed in-class free response question (essay).

**On the second day of school**, students will turn in ***The Scarlet Letter* Literary Chart** and take an **objective test** over the novel (*a combination of matching, true/false, and multiple choice questions focusing on characterization, setting, conflict and plot*).

**On the third day of school**, students will be required to write a timed free response (essay) in class, developing **one** of the thematic statements composed and using the text evidence marked in the novel. **This assignment may be completed using either a print version of the novel OR you may use a Kindle and track text evidence on the Kindle in the notes section.**

**Before reading**, complete the definitions in *The Scarlet Letter Literary Chart*. Next, read the descriptions provided for the **five topics/ideas** you will be tracking in the novel and familiarize yourself with each one (they are listed below). Also, note the abbreviations for each topic/idea to be written on the **OUTSIDE** margins of each page next to the highlighted material.

**While reading**, track **ALL** of the assigned topics/ideas as outlined below, as well as the literary elements in *The Scarlet Letter Literary Chart*. As you read the novel, read closely to identify any and all **text evidence** that supports each topic/idea. Each time you encounter **text evidence** that supports one of the assigned topics/ideas, **highlight it in your novel**, and then **write the identifying abbreviation next to the highlighted text evidence in the OUTSIDE margin of the page** (*do not write in the center margin*). In addition, annotate throughout the novel, noting the *effects* of the devices used (as it pertains to development of character, conflict, mood, tone and/or theme). There is no correct total number of pieces of text evidence that should be highlighted when you are finished. Just pay attention and mark **every** instance of text evidence that supports one of the topics/ideas. When you are finished reading, you should have a **MINIMUM** of 15-20 highlighted pieces of text evidence to support **EACH** topic/idea with highlighted text evidence from the beginning, middle, and end of the novel.

**After reading**, compose three thematic statements using the sample template provided below.

#### **Topics/ideas to be identified and abbreviations to be used in the margins:**

S = Sin  
P = Puritanism  
N = Nature  
H = Hypocrisy  
I/C = Individuality vs. Conformity

An excerpt from an actual page from the novel is provided to demonstrate how to choose and annotate text evidence in the novel. The text below addresses the topic/idea of Puritanism and shows the **narrow-minded, unforgiving nature of the Puritans** (this **note** would be annotated on the side of the passage as well). The text that supports the topic/idea is **highlighted**, and **the letter P is written boldly in the OUTSIDE margin** to show the text represents the topic/idea of **Puritanism**.

"The magistrates are God-fearing gentlemen, but merciful overmuch--that is a truth," added a third autumnal matron. "At the very least, they should have put the brand of a hot iron on Hester Prynne's forehead. Madame Hester would have winced at that, I warrant me. But she--the naughty baggage-- little will she care what **P** they put upon the bodice of her gown. Why, look you, she may cover it with a brooch, or such like. heathenish adornment, and so walk the streets as brave as ever."

"Ah, but," interposed, more softly, a young wife, holding a child by the hand, "let her cover the mark as she will, the pang of it will be always in her heart. "

#### **Explanations of Topics/Ideas**

Listed below are more thorough explanations for each of the topics/ideas to be tracked and highlighted in the novel as you read. Study and familiarize yourself with the explanations provided to help you locate text evidence that accurately supports each topic/idea.

## **Sin**

The Puritans believed people were born sinners. Puritan preachers depicted each human life as suspended by a string over the fiery pit of hell. As a result, the Puritans maintained strict watch over themselves and their fellow townspeople, and sins such as adultery were punishable by death. What does it mean to sin, and who are the novel's real sinners?

## **Puritanism**

Even though Nathaniel was a Dark/Gothic Romantic writer, he focused a great deal of his writing on the Puritans, his familial heritage. *The Scarlet Letter* presents a critical, even disdainful, view of Puritanism. The narrator depicts Puritan society as drab, confining, unforgiving, and narrow-minded. The Puritans appear as shallow hypocrites whose opinion of Hester and Pearl improves only when they become more of an asset to the community.

## **Nature**

In *The Scarlet Letter*, nature stands in contrast to Puritanism; here is where readers see the Romantic Era's influence in Hawthorne's writing, portraying nature in a positive light. Where Puritanism is merciless and rigid, nature is forgiving and flexible. The narrator contrasts the "black flower" of the prison that punishes sin with the red rose bush that he imagines forgives those sentenced to die. The theme of nature continues with the forest outside Boston. In the dark forest, wild, passionate, and persecuted can escape from the strict, repressive morality of Puritan society. The forest provides a measure of comfort and protection that exists nowhere in society.

## **Hypocrisy**

Hypocrisy is the practice of claiming to have moral standards or a belief to which one's own behavior does not conform---a pretense (saying one thing; doing another). One of the most prevalent themes in *The Scarlet Letter* is the theme of hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is seen not only as a sin in *The Scarlet Letter*, but as a sin that leads to great personal injury. The narrator warns us not to let our reputations become more important than our lives.

## **Individuality vs. Conformity**

Puritan society demanded conformity because it considered any breach of that conformity a threat to its security and its religion. Those who don't conform, like Hester, suffer the consequences: the townspeople punish, shun, and humiliate. In general in *The Scarlet Letter*, the conflict between individuality and conformity is also a battle between appearance and reality. Because the Puritan government is so harsh, all Puritans are always concerned about looking like conformists to best fit in. This means that they hide the reality of their human flaws, frailties, and sins in order to avoid punishment. The result is secrets that embody disconnect between private individual reality and the need to maintain the appearance of public conformity. And though keeping secrets provides a short-term solution for the sinner to avoid punishment, does hiding behind a mask of secret-keeping conformity ultimately warp and destroy a person?

(<http://www.litcharts.com>)

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Ms. Hurtte

American Literature and Composition

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***The Scarlet Letter* Literary Chart**

Define the terms listed below and identify ONE piece of text evidence for each from the novel. Provide a proper in-text citation (author name and page number) for each example. At the bottom of this page, provide a properly formatted citation for the novel.

<b>Device</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Textual Example</b>
<b>Asyndeton (Syntax)</b>		
<b>Irony</b>		
<b>Juxtaposition</b>		
<b>Symbolism</b> <i>The scaffold (what does it symbolize?)</i>		
<b>Symbolism</b> <b>The Scarlet "A"</b> <i>(what does it symbolize at the beginning and end of the novel?)</i>		
<b>Imagery</b>		

**Citation:**

# Creating Effective Thesis Statements

## What is a thesis statement?

**A thesis statement is a sentence that expresses the writer's position on a certain topic. It is reasonable for the reader of a thesis statement to assume that it will be supported by evidence.**

A thesis statement expresses an idea that the speaker or writer intends to support or "prove." In its beginning stages, it is much like a hypothesis in science. The speaker or writer begins with an idea that he or she believes may be correct. The purpose of a speech or essay may be to justify a thesis by using evidence presented in a logical order. When the writer forms his or her idea into a sentence that will serve as the cornerstone of a piece of writing, we call this sentence the thesis statement. The structure and content of the thesis statement will be shaped according to the author's purpose.

## Purposes for Writing

### Narration

When we narrate, we are telling a story. It may be fictional or based on reality, but our main purpose is to relate a series of incidents that add up to an observation about life. The **thesis of a narrative** is most often implied, embedded inside the author's way of telling the story. When readers analyze a piece of narration, part of their task is to determine from the language the thesis, or main idea, of the story. It is not stated explicitly in the narrative but is left to the reader to determine through inference.

### Description

When the writer's purpose is to describe, he or she attempts to build an image of physical, mental, or emotional experience in the reader's mind by using language to simulate reality. A **descriptive thesis statement** will often convey the author's attitude about the subject he or she is describing.

### Persuasion

When we write to persuade, our purpose is to convince an audience that a certain idea (thesis) is credible by presenting evidence that supports our position. Much of the writing and speaking that human beings do is persuasive in nature. A **persuasive thesis statement** clearly expresses the position of the author on a particular subject and suggests in a general way *why* and *how* the position is viable.

### Exposition

When we write expository prose, we write to explain something to an audience. We may compare and contrast different places or ideas or items. We may separate something large and difficult to understand into smaller, more manageable categories (classification). We may explain the causes and effects of an event. We may define something (definition). We may present the results of research. We may illustrate a concept through analogy or imagery (illustration). We may explain to an audience the process of doing something like installing software or changing a tire (process, often referred to as "how-to"). Or we may analyze something by looking at its elements in order to better understand its nature (analysis). An **expository thesis statement** will explain the writer's ideas about the subject and will suggest how and/or why these ideas are reasonable and accurate.

All **literary analysis** essays are **expository** because their purpose is to **explain** what the writer thinks the text contributes to an understanding of the world around us and our own lives (*why* the text is important). A literary analysis will also examine the means by which the writer conveys an idea through the use of language (*how* the author uses rhetorical and literary devices to create meaning). A literary analysis thesis statement will address **both the means** the author uses **and the meaning** that the author creates.

## How do I write a thesis statement?

There are really two ways to approach writing a thesis statement. One way is to start by making an assertion (an idea of your own that must be supported by evidence) and then to weigh the facts and evidence that may or may not support

that assertion. When you create a preliminary thesis statement this way, you often have to change your thesis because the evidence may not necessarily support your position.

The other way is to examine the available data or text, interpret it, and then form your thesis statement based on what you have discovered through your study of the data. Each method has its pros and cons. Your individual thinking style will most likely influence the way you choose to produce your thesis statement.

### Literary Analysis Thesis Statements

**How do I write a literary analysis thesis statement?** Though you can start by simply reading a text and writing a statement explaining some aspect of its meaning, then search for quotations and details that support your ideas, it is really easier to begin with quotations and details from the text itself, writing interpretations of these pieces of the text and then searching for connections and contrasts among them.

- As you are reading the text, highlight interesting and important words, phrases, images, and passages, looking for patterns among these elements.
- In the margins, write questions and observations on which you can later base commentary.
- After you have completed your reading, browse through your annotations and journal observations. Then write a generalization about the text (thesis statement), using a variation of the following format:

In \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
(title of work) (name of author)

uses \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
(diction, imagery, detail, assonance, metaphor, motifs, etc.) (reveal, show, explore, portray, convey, emphasize, suggest)

\_\_\_\_\_.  
(tone, theme, purpose, etc.)

#### Examples:

- In *Moby Dick*, Herman Melville uses the image of the white whale to reveal the contradictory nature of evil.
- In *A Separate Peace*, John Knowles uses the archetypal image of the Tree of Knowledge to explore the painful transition from childhood innocence to adult experience.
- In *Where the Red Fern Grows*, Wilson Rawls uses diction connected with hunting to convey the perilous yet exhilarating relationship between humans and nature.
- In *Anne of Green Gables*, L.M. Montgomery personifies trees, lakes, and other elements of nature to suggest the friendship that can develop between people and the natural world.
- In the poem "Jabberwocky" by Lewis Carroll, the author uses scary-sounding nonsense words to create an ominous yet humorous tone.
- In *Wuthering Heights*, Emily Bronte uses the archetype of the demon lover to reveal to the reader the dangers of passionate love.
- In *The Scarlet Letter*, Nathaniel Hawthorne uses the scaffold to symbolize the value of suffering.
- In T.S. Eliot's poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," the author uses the color yellow to represent the corruption and decay prevalent in modern society.
- In *The Great Gatsby*, F. Scott Fitzgerald uses hyperbole to comment on the excesses of American materialism.

For more help with thesis statements, watch this cool video on Shmoop:  
<http://www.shmoop.com/video/thesis-sentence-v-topic-sentence>