

Name: _____

Honors World Studies II

Date: _____

Unit 1 – Renaissance and Reformation Writing Thesis Statements

The Role of the Thesis in Persuasive Writing

Persuasion is a skill you practice regularly in your daily life: you may persuade your siblings to help you clean the house, your parents to let you borrow the car, or your friend to watch your favorite movie. In your classes you are often tasked with making a persuasive case in writing – that is, you are asked to convince a reader of your point of view in an interesting, logical manner. Written persuasion follows a predictable pattern: after a brief introduction of your topic, you state your point of view on the topic with supporting evidence. The guiding point of the argument you will make in the rest of your essay is called the **thesis**.

A thesis statement:

- is a statement somewhere in your introduction (first paragraph) that takes a clear position on the subject to be discussed, presenting what you believe and why you believe it.

- contains three different sections:

 - identification of the topic

 - your opinion of the topic

 - the main arguments you are making to support your opinion

- directly answers the question asked in a statement that someone could disagree with; it is an *interpretation* of a subject, not a statement of the subject itself.

- is a sophisticated statement; it does not make you think “Of course!” “So what?” or “Big deal?”

- is a road map for the essay; it states the arguments and examples or evidence you will use to prove your point.

- is not a personal statement (no first person – “I” or “I think”)

Thesis Statement – A direct statement that explains the topic of your essay, what you believe about that topic, and why you believe it.

How Do I Create A Thesis?

When creating your thesis, ask yourself the following questions:

- Does my thesis actually address the question or writing prompt?

 - Re-read the question and answer it with your thesis; this can help you identify if your thesis does not directly answer the question or correctly respond to the prompt.

- Have I taken a position that others might challenge or oppose?

 - If your thesis simply states facts that no one would or could disagree with, you are simply providing a summary rather than making an argument.

- Is my thesis statement broad enough?

 - Thesis statements that are too specific often do not have a strong argument because it is difficult to add supporting details.

Identifying a Strong Thesis

Read the thesis statement examples below. Then determine whether each is a strong or weak thesis and explain why it is a strong or weak thesis.

Thesis	Weak or Strong	Reason
Terrorism should not happen.		
Why should we recycle?		
Tom Brady is the best thing to happen to football in twenty years.		
There are many types of water in the world, such as rivers, lakes, and oceans.		
Robin Williams died in 2014.		
Racism is bad because it makes others feel put down, it sends a bad example to our children, and it adds hate to the world.		
The violence depicted on television and in video games has an effect on behavior.		
Parents should give children a weekly allowance because it teaches them responsibility, the value of a dollar, and respect for belongings.		

Thesis Example

Below is an example of the process followed to create a thesis statement that answers a question:

In your opinion, do high school sports have a positive influence on students?

Identification of Topic	Statement of Your Opinion	Arguments to Support Your Opinion
Sports offered in high school	They have a positive influence	REASON #1: Teach social skills REASON #2: Teach time-management REASON #3: Provide exercise and teach benefits of hard work
Thesis: High school sports have a positive influence on high school students <u>because</u> they teach social skills, reinforce time-management skills, provide exercise and show the benefits of hard work.		

Process Example

Suppose you are asked to answer the question “What is the best movie of all time?” Your basic thesis might be “*The best movie of all time is Forrest Gump*” but you would need to ask yourself *why* Forrest Gump is the best movie of all time in order to identify three supporting reasons to prove your thesis.

Identification of Topic	Statement of Your Opinion	Supporting Arguments
the best movie of all time	<i>Forrest Gump</i> is the best movie of all time.	REASON #1: <i>Forrest Gump</i> contains important themes. REASON #2: <i>Forrest Gump</i> contains true-to-life events. REASON #3: <i>Forrest Gump</i> is a character that the viewer can truly love.
Thesis <i>Forrest Gump</i> is the best movie of all time because it contains important themes, true-to-life events, and a character that the viewer can truly love.		

GUIDED PRACTICE

Read the following writing prompt and complete the tables that follow.

In your opinion, should the driving age be raised from 16 to 18?

Identification of Topic	Statement of Your Opinion	Arguments to Support Your Opinion
		REASON #1: REASON #2: REASON #3:
Thesis:		