

THESIS STATEMENTS FOR ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAYS

IB History of the Americas Year 1

THE FOUNDATION OF A STRONG PAPER



Does your essay contain a thesis statement that clearly addresses and deals with the question?



Do arguments within the essay support the thesis and lead toward a viable conclusion?



Does the essay end with a clear restatement of the thesis in a way that affirms what the writer was attempting to prove?



ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING IN HISTORY

When you write a history paper, you are **like a lawyer presenting a case before a jury.**

You must **present a set of arguments that support your position (the thesis statement).** You must draw your arguments from the evidence available, document-based facts and/or outside information (your own knowledge beyond the documents).

You must convince a jury that your position is correct; the jury is your reader.



BE ASSERTIVE –
NEVER USE “I
THINK” OR “I
BELIEVE” BEFORE
YOUR ARGUMENT.



SO WHAT IS A THESIS STATEMENT?

For many students this is one of the most important and least understood parts of a good essay. A thesis statement comes at the beginning of your essay in a short introductory paragraph where you basically tell the reader the position you will attempt to prove (in about 1- 3 sentences).

In order to create a good thesis statement, **you must understand exactly what the question is asking you to do** and then craft your thesis to **address each of the major issues presented by the question.** In this situation a simple repetition of the question will not be considered a good thesis statement. You have to create a thesis that tackles the issues of the question and states what you plan to prove regarding those issues. A good introductory paragraph and thesis statement will also suggest briefly how **you plan to prove your position.**



A THESIS STATEMENT IS A ROADMAP OF YOUR ESSAY

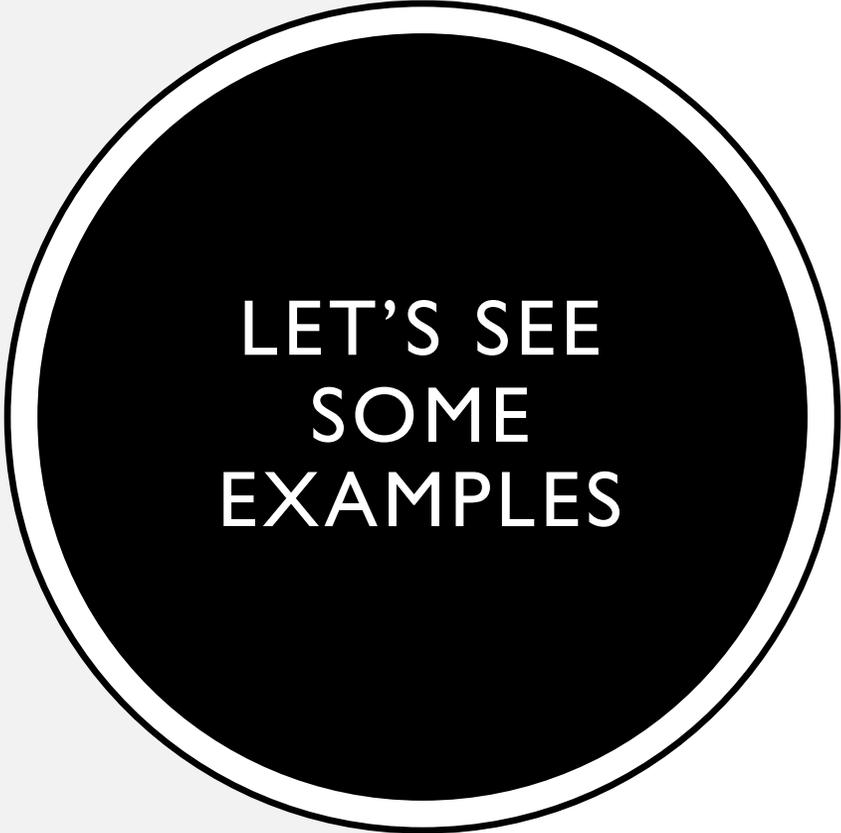
When you have finished your introductory paragraph/thesis statement, you basically have a **roadmap that points the direction your essay will travel**, marks the **turning points** of your trip, and **tells the reader the conclusion** you plan to reach. Writing the essay at that point becomes much easier for you to do – just connect the points on the map.

THE INTRODUCTION

Together the thesis statement and the introduction must address the central issues of the question in a clear way.

Each paragraph that follows must contain only information used in support of that thesis. Nothing should appear in your essay that is not essential to the support of that thesis statement.

A good essay will end with a strong, short conclusion that restates the thesis.



LET'S SEE
SOME
EXAMPLES

Prompt: *To what extent did the foreign policy objectives of the first five presidential administrations center around the question of “entangling alliances” and the decision to remain neutral in European affairs?*

INADEQUATE, UNDERDEVELOPED THIS STATEMENT

With the Atlantic Ocean between the United States and the European powers, the first five American presidents could safely follow a policy of complete isolation from world affairs while building a young and powerful nation.

ADEQUATE THESIS STATEMENT

The Treaty of Friendship of 1778 with France that helped secure the independence of America in the American Revolution did not look so good in 1793 when France was fighting Britain and the United States might be drawn into that war. From Washington to Monroe, American presidents sought to escape involvement in the affairs of Europe behind a wall of neutrality.

SOPHISTICATED THESIS STATEMENT

From Washington to Monroe, all American presidents recognized U.S. economic dependency upon trade with Europe and the world, but each also realized that for both internal political reasons and external military reasons, the United States was in no position to enter a foreign war. Fearful that “entangling alliances” would draw the U.S. into foreign wars that would divide its people internally, while both militarily and economically threaten the survival of the young nation, the first five presidents sought to maintain a policy of neutrality.

**A STRONG THESIS STATEMENT
WILL LEAD TO A STRONG ESSAY.**