

This is the Thesis

Driving Question?

How can we craft a clear, focused and sophisticated thesis that outlines a cohesive and compelling argument in response to a prompt we have written?

Let's Talk: **Main Argument**

- A strong thesis...
- * **ANSWERS** the prompts
- * **Tells HOW** it will answer the prompt
- * **Is one CONCISE** thought
- * **Is DEBATABLE**

Essay arguing that Harper should keep the dance.

- These are our reasons why:
 - The school is taking extra precautions
 - Giving students a normal high school experience is important
 - The students are not unfamiliar with this kind of violence

Example #1

- Principal Sanders has a tough choice to make in deciding whether or not to cancel the homecoming game and dance for Harper High School students.

Example #1: Not a thesis

- *Principal Sanders has a tough choice to make in deciding whether or not to cancel the homecoming game and dance for Harper High School students.*
- **This is not a solid thesis:**
 - **The argument is not clear**
 - **No stance is taken**
 - **It is not debatable**

Example #2

- Harper High School should not cancel the homecoming game and dance for its students because the students should have a normal experience, the school is safe, and because the school will be extra careful.

Example #2: Lower Level

- *Harper High School should not to cancel the homecoming game and dance for its students because the (1)students should have a normal experience, (2)the school is safe, and because (3)the school will be extra careful.*
- This is **not a bad thesis**; however, it is **not a strong thesis** either:
 - **Simple structure:**
“This” **because** of “That”
 - **Three point thesis / a listing thesis**
 - **Diction is low level**

To Make a Thesis Stronger

- Use **Qualifiers** like “although...”, “when...”, “since...” and “if..., then...”
- *Qualifiers help eliminate reliance on the word “because” and result in a more mature sounding argument.*
- Also, try to move away from a listing / three point thesis

Example #3

- If the school takes extra precautions, they should keep the dance because it is important for them to feel normal and they are used to this kind of violence anyway.

Example #3: Middle Level

- *If the school takes extra precautions, they should keep the dance and the game because it is important for them to feel normal and they are used to this kind of violence anyway.*
- This is considered to be a **good thesis**:
 - **Still reliant on “This” because of “That”; rather, “This” IS “That”**
 - **Uses qualifier “If... Then”**
 - **Less of a three point thesis / a listing thesis**
 - **The sentence is a bit vague and confusing; who is “they” and “them”?**

Example #3

- While the number of students who have experienced gun violence at Harper are shockingly high, the administration should take added precautions in hosting the homecoming game and dance in order to preserve a needed sense of normalcy for students.

Example #3: Higher Level

- *While the number of students who have experienced gun violence at Harper are shockingly high, the administration should take added precautions in hosting the homecoming game and dance in order preserve a needed sense of normalcy for students.*
- This is considered to be a **strong thesis**:
 - **Establishes an argument without “because”**
 - **Is not a three point thesis / a listing thesis**
 - **Uses high level diction.**

Let's Talk: Topic Sentences

- * **Topic Sentences should introduce an argument, NOT a fact or a piece of data.**
- * Just like a thesis, **a topic sentence should be clear, direct, and DEBATABLE.**
- * If I am writing a body paragraph about how hiring walking billboards is an effective hiring strategy...
 - * **Weak TS:** “Companies like Abercrombie and Fitch Hire ‘walking billboards’.”
 - * **Stronger TS:** “Companies like A&F hire good looking people as ‘walking billboards’ because it is an effective way to get people into their stores.”

Let's Talk: Main Argument

Even though hiring employees as “walking billboards” may be misinterpreted as discrimination, businesses would be wise to use this effective and legal strategy.

- * **ANSWERS** the prompts
- * **Tells HOW** it will answer the prompt
- * **Is one CONCISE** thought
- * **Is DEBATABLE**

Let's Talk: Main Argument

Even though hiring employees as “walking billboards” may be **misinterpreted as discrimination**, **businesses would be wise to use this effective and legal** strategy.

NOTICE THAT...

The whole essay should NOT be spent **making an argument**.

MOST of the essay is spent on presenting the facts.

A) It is effective.

B) It is legal.

C) It is not discriminatory

Let's Talk: Commentary

- * **Alternate between evidence and commentary!**
- * DO go back and forth between lines of examples and analysis
- * **Keep asking yourself: “Why is this important?”** after every example when doing analysis
- * **Two ways to insert analysis:**
 - * 1) **Golden Lines style**
 - * Quotation > Summary > Context > Analysis
 - * 2) **“Quotation Sandwich” style**
 - * Context > Quotation > Analysis
 - * 3) **“Say Mean Matter” style (for “follow-up” evidence)**
 - * Quotation > Summary > Analysis

Let's Talk: Quotation Integration

* Do:

- * When the boy says, "This is a good place, Papa,"¹ his father is cooking dinner for them over a campfire.
Integrated!

* Do:

- * While his father is cooking dinner for them over a campfire, the boy says, "This is a good place, Papa."¹
Integrated!

* Don't:

- * "This is a good place, Papa."¹ His father is cooking dinner for them over a campfire.
Plopped :(

Let's Talk: Organization & Style

- * **Introductions** can be a good place to start to **include the relevant background information**

- * **Hook >**

- * **Transition >**

- * **ID the text >**

- * **Main Argument (ie: thesis)**

- * **Conclusions** are a chance to...

- * Present a **new, relevant idea**

- * **Restate the thesis** in a new way

- * Discuss any **additional commentary** you could not find a place for in the essay

Let's Talk: Organization & Style

- * When you think about organizing your essay, think about not only explaining your stance, but also putting information into context:
- * **Think about: *Should this body paragraph:***
 - * **Explain background info**
 - * **BUILD a case;** don't use a "listing" style
 - * **Fully expand on a part of the thesis**
 - * **Use a counter-argument**