A thesis is a claim of what you believe and why you believe it. When you write an essay, you MUST clearly state your thesis in the introduction - the reason you are writing the essay is to prove your thesis. Without a thesis you are just listing facts and telling stories.

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

A thesis should:

Take a clear position.

Be arguable; you should have to PROVE your statement.

Not make you think, “Duh!” - “So what?” - “Gee, no kidding!” or “Who cares?”

State the examples, explanations, and/or evidence you might use to prove your point.

Be a statement, not a question.

Not be personal (no using “I” or “I think”).

**PART 1:** *Read the possible thesis statements below and decide whether they are strong or weak by evaluating whether they meet all of the requirements for a thesis statement listed above.*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Thesis** | **Strong or Weak?** | **Reason**  ***(Why is it strong or weak?)*** |
| Terrorism should not happen. |  |  |
| Why should we recycle? |  |  |
| Tom Brady is the best thing that has happened to football in twenty years. |  |  |
| Though many people find hip-hop music offensive, hip-hop actually offers youth an opportunity for expressing themselves artistically, emotionally, and physically. |  |  |
| Alcohol abuse. |  |  |
| There are many types of water in the world, like rivers, lakes, and oceans. |  |  |
| I enjoy white water rafting. |  |  |
| Robin Williams died in 2014. |  |  |
| Steroids should be banned from sports because they are addictive, they send the wrong example to children, and they give an unfair advantage to the players taking them. |  |  |
| Alcohol is bad for you in some ways but good for you in others. |  |  |
| Racism is not a good thing because it makes others feel put down, it sends a bad example to our children, and it adds hate to the world. |  |  |
| I believe the use of animals for medical research should be banned because, animals have rights too, we don’t learn as much as we need to by using them, and it is expensive. |  |  |
| 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. |  |  |
| People should not be allowed to smoke in public places. |  |  |

**PART 2:** *Creating a thesis statement.*

**Every thesis needs these three things**:

**Identification** (What is the topic you are talking about?)

**Claim** (What do you believe about the topic?)

**Reasons for support** (What are the 3 main reasons you can support your claim? This will basically outline the body paragraphs of your essay.)

**EXAMPLE:**

Educators often discuss whether high school sports have a positive influence on students. Some educators think high school sports do have a positive influence because the lessons learned from athletic competition add to the lessons learned in the classroom. Other educators think high school sports do not have a positive influence because the emphasis on sports often overshadows student achievement in other areas. In your opinion, do high school sports have a positive influence on students?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **ID-Identify topic**    Sports offered in high school | **Claim-What you believe**    They have a positive influence | **Reasons for support; reasons you believe your claim is true**  Teach social skills  Teach time-management  Teach the benefits of hard work |
| **Thesis:**  High school sports have a positive influence on high school students **because** they teach social skills, reinforce time-management skills, and show the benefits of hard work. | | |

**GUIDED PRACTICE:** *Read the information below and complete the boxes to create a thesis statement that includes the three key parts.*

The state of Illinois has been locked in a debate for several years as to whether the driving age should be raised from 16 to 18. Some people feel that 16-year-olds lack the responsibility and maturity to handle the significant privilege of driving. Others argue that 16-year-olds use their licenses for much more than social events. In your opinion, should the driving age be raised from 16 to 18?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **ID-Identify topic** | **Claim-What you believe** | **Reasons for support-3 general reasons you believe your claim is true** |
| **Thesis**: | | |

**INDIVIDUAL PRACTICE:**

**#1**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **ID-Identify topic**      **Ipods/Phones in School** | **Claim-What you believe** | **Reasons for support-3 general reasons you believe your claim is true** |
| **Thesis**: | | |

**#2**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **ID-Identify topic**    **Drugs** | **Claim-What you believe** | **Reasons for support-3 general reasons you believe your claim is true** |
| **Thesis**: | | |

**#3**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **ID-Identify topic**      **Parents** | **Claim-What you believe** | **Reasons for support-3 general reasons you believe your claim is true** |
| **Thesis**: | | |

**PART 3:** Now that you have REALLY learned how to write a thesis statement, your job is to create something you can prove about the Protestant Reformation by answering the following question: “What was the most important cause of the Protestant Reformation?”

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **ID-Identify topic** | **Claim-What you believe** | **Reasons for support-3 general reasons you believe your claim is true.**    **REASON #1:**              **REASON #2:**                **REASON #3:** |
| **Thesis**: | | |