**The Thesis Statement**

*A thesis statement summarizes the central idea of the paper and can be defended by facts and evidence gathered in research.*

# **Thesis:**

* A clear, assertive statement
* Comes at the end of the introduction
* Explains to the reader what the paper will prove or demonstrate

# **Characteristics of a good thesis statement:**

* It will be a complete sentence, not a fragment
  + It will also be short and simple
* It will have a narrow focus
* It will be a statement, not a question
* It will show confidence, avoid hesitant phrases like "I think' or 'In my opinion," or qualifiers like might, maybe, etc.
* It will show an attitude or point of view, which may be supported by evidence

# **How to write a thesis statement**

1. Begin with a topic question. If you are writing based on an essay prompt, this step has been done for you.
2. Form an opinion (do not be wishy-washy)
3. If you're writing about a controversial topic, make sure you have considered both sides equally to avoid bias.

# **When in doubt, consider the following:**

* Have you answered the question or merely restated it? The following examples are based on this question: Do Romeo's prior feelings for Rosaline diminish the credibility of his love for Juliet?
  + Good example: *Romeo's prior feelings for Rosaline diminish the credibility of his love for Juliet.*
  + Bad example: *This essay examines whether or not Romeo's prior feelings for Rosaline diminish his love for Juliet.*
* Have you tried to argue both sides of the case? It is important to acknowledge the other side and address the other position. That does not, however, excuse you from choosing a side.
  + Good example: *Juliet was not the first woman to capture Romeo's fancy; she was, however, the one who affected him the most.*
  + Bad example: *Romeo loved Juliet with all his heart, but he loved Rosaline too. It could be argued they were both his favorite.*
* Have you prejudged the issue by using loaded language? Immature writers manipulate readers through emotionally-charged language.
  + Bad example: *Immature, whiny, male-pig Romeo, a male harlot, ruined precious Juliet whom he loved no more than Rosaline.*

**Types of Thesis Statements You Will Encounter This Year**

* **List** – This is perhaps the most basic. It states your opinions and lists your reasons
  + Abigail Williams is the most unethical character in *The Crucible* because of her lying, manipulating, and selfishness.
* **Concession** – This is where you acknowledge that there is another side to the argument and they have **one**valid point.
  + Despite the fact that Gatsby obtained his wealth illegally, he is still considered a great man because of his generosity and kindness.
* **Boomer (or refutation)** – You also acknowledge the other side, but this time you refute their claims.
  + Not only do fidget spinners annoy and distract others, but those who claim they help students focus are losing sight of the fact that most students who have them don’t actually need them.

Now let's practice!

Practice Prompt 1: Pep rallies are a long-standing tradition in public schools. However, with the increasing pressure on our public school system to provide a quality education, there has been some debate as to whether or not pep rallies should be kept in schools. Should schools continue to uphold this tradition or should pep rallies be abolished in favor of more instructional time?

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Practice Prompt 2: Law makers have long considered raising the driving age in Montana from fifteen to eighteen. Should the driving age be raised or kept where it is?

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Practice Prompt 3: A lot of focus is given to the MBI expectations (be responsible, be respectful, be involved, be a graduate), but do they have any value to the Helena school system?

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