TODAY’S LESSON…WRITING THESIS STATEMENTS

An Interactive Activity to Develop Effective Writing Skills
Learning Objective

• Given the definition and components of a thesis statement, along with a sample writing prompt with pre-written thesis statements, students will be able to distinguish the better of three thesis statements by correctly identifying it.
Discussion Questions
...with your neighbor

- When you read a passage, how much do you have to read to understand the topic or purpose?

- What is the purpose of writing an essay?
Thesis Statements...purpose

- Give direction
Where am I going?

An essay without a thesis statement is like a car without a driver.
What is a thesis statement?

- A thesis statement is a sentence used in an essay that serves as the guide for the essay and directly answers the question or task asked of you.
What is a thesis **NOT**?

- A factual statement
- A topic sentence

**TOPIC SENTENCE:**
Bhutan is a small nation in South Asia.
Characteristics

- Addresses the prompt clearly
- Makes a claim, or
- Presents an argument
- Is arguable (an opinion)
- In first paragraph of essay
LET’S TRY TO SPOT A THESIS!

On each of the following slides, read the writing prompt and the two sample statements. Click on the one that is the best choice for a thesis.
1. Early on in life, people develop an admiration for heroes. In a well-developed essay, discuss a person you admire and why you chose this person.

Option A

One person I admire is Babe Ruth, who played baseball from 1914 until 1935.

Option B

One person I admire is Babe Ruth, the greatest baseball player of all time.
Incorrect

Option A

One person I admire is Babe Ruth, who played baseball from 1914 until 1935.

Although this does address the writing prompt, this is a factual statement. A thesis statement should be something you can argue for or against.
Correct! Great Job!

Option B

One person I admire is Babe Ruth, the greatest baseball player of all time.

This statement addresses the prompt, and presents an opinion that can be argued.
2. …Discuss the social, political and economic effects of World War II on the United States.

Option A
World War II was a costly war that had a major impact on the economy of the United States.

Option B
World War II not only affected the economy of the United States, but also altered the role of the American government and the American people forever.
Incorrect

Option A

World War II was a **costly** war that had a major impact on the economy of the United States

Although this is meets all the criteria for a thesis statement, it only addresses part of the writing prompt. Remember, the statement tells the reader what to expect. With this as a thesis, one would only expect to read about the economic effects.
World War II not only affected the economy of the United States, but also altered the role of the American government and the American people forever.

This is correct because it addresses the social, economic and political effects as stated in the prompt. Notice that the words people (social) and government (political) were used in this statement. This makes the sentence more original and shows the reader that you know what “social” and “political” refer to.
3. ... Describe three physical features of Latin America and their importance to the region.

Option A
The Andes Mountains, the Amazon River and Yucatan Peninsula are the three most significant physical features in Latin America.

Option B
Three physical features found in Latin America are the Andes Mountains, the Amazon River and the Yucatan Peninsula.
Almost! But not quite.

Option B

Three physical features found in Latin America are the Andes Mountains, the Amazon River and the Yucatan Peninsula, which are all vital to the region.

This is a topic sentence. The reason it is not a good thesis is because it does not present an argument or address the whole prompt. It is a factual statement. To make it a strong thesis, you must add to it.
The Andes Mountains, the Amazon River and Yucatan Peninsula are the three most significant physical features in Latin America.

This statement gives an argument, it presents the three physical features asked for in the prompt, and makes reference to the importance (significance)
4. Discuss the effect of climate and the vegetation on Sub-Saharan Africa. Be sure to discuss the factors contributing to climate, and the impact human activity has on the vegetation.

**Option A**

Human activity is altering the vegetation of Sub-Saharan Africa and causing desertification, which will have devastating effects on the people of the region.

**Option B**

Even though the climate and vegetation of Sub-Saharan Africa varies as a result of latitude and human activity, they are still the two most important factors in determining the quality of life.
This one is tricky!

Option A

Human activity is altering the vegetation of Sub-Saharan Africa and causing desertification, which will have devastating effects on the people of the region.

This one would be perfect for a thesis, there is only one thing wrong with it. It does not address all of the writing prompt. It only addresses the vegetation, but not the climate or the factors for climate.
This statement gives an argument, and address all aspects of the writing prompt (topic, effect, factors). Notice how you do not have to go into detail, just give the reader a hint of what you will write about.
5. In South Asia, globalization has played a big role in the developing economies of the region. Discuss the positive and negative effects of globalization in one South Asian country.

**Option A**

Globalization in India has offered solutions to poverty for some and created more severe poverty for others.

**Option B**

In India, globalization has meant new jobs for India’s emerging middle class.
Option A

Globalization in India has offered solutions to poverty for some and created more severe poverty for others.

There is an opinion (it has offered solutions, it has created more severe poverty). It addresses the positive (solutions) and negative (poverty) effects.
In India, globalization has meant new jobs for India’s emerging middle class.

Again, this would be a perfect thesis statement, if the prompt only asked for the effects of globalization. The prompt, however, specifies positive and negative effects. This is only positive.
For Review!

- When reading back your thesis, ask yourself a few questions
Did I address all parts of the prompt?
Can I argue against this statement?
Will I address all this in my essay?
Is it grammatically correct?
Assignment

1. Write a thesis for the following statement:
   History is an important component in every day life.

2. Use the “why study history” article to help form your essay/outline.