

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## CAUSES OF THE CIVIL WAR - THESIS GUIDELINES

A thesis is:

- The point you are making throughout your essay
- The most important part of the paper
- Something you have to support with facts, details, quotes, and other evidence
- A guide to help you organize your thinking.

If you have a good thesis statement, it will guide how you structure your essay.

Qualities of a good thesis statement:

- Broad enough to include several supporting ideas
- Specific enough to focus your work
- Directly related to the question you've been asked

### Styles of thesis statement:

(Easier) Previewing major points – **list**, *but don't describe*, the key ideas you're going to talk about later.

Explorers traveled to the New World to find trade routes, look for gold, and settle new territory.

You can also talk about cause and effect:

Railroads changed America by transporting immigrants and opening new markets [causes], which displaced Native Americans from their land [effect].

Or you can do one cause and two effects:

Immigrants worked for low wages [cause], which led to poor living conditions and crowded cities [effect].

(Harder) Identifying a major theme – identify one “big idea” that you will prove throughout the essay. You will then connect back to this theme in each topic sentence.

Explorers traveling to the New World changed the world forever.

*Sample topic sentence:* Explorers searching for new trade routes changed the way people travel.

Railroads made it possible for America to become the most powerful country of the 1900's.

*Sample topic sentence:* By connecting the country from coast to coast, railroads unified the country and made it stronger.

Immigration in the 1800's permanently transformed American cities.

*Sample topic sentence:* As more immigrants arrived and settled in port cities, these cities grew in population.

OVER --->

TIPS:

- Use the essay topic/question to help you frame the thesis statement!
- If the word ***“because”*** appears in your thesis statement, you have gone too far. Explanation of your thesis belongs in the body of the essay.
- The thesis statement should be the LAST sentence(s) in the intro paragraph. Unlike a body paragraph, you want to save your major point for the end.

Academic: In your thesis, preview the three major topics you intend to discuss.

CP: In your thesis, refer to the major ideas you intend to explore about political, social, and economic causes of the Civil War.

Honors: In your thesis, introduce the underlying issues that led to the Civil War.

In the space below, please draft your thesis statement. If you want to try a few different versions for me to check, please feel free!

Thesis statement: