6.4 Writing a thesis statement

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 17 marks**

KEY WORDS synthesis thesis • prompt • qualified thesis • remote work • output • position

Objective

Build the skills to write a **synthesis thesis** : a clear position on an issue that several sources can support, which goes beyond any one source.

You must be able to:

- write a thesis that answers the synthesis question
- make a thesis that sources can support
- qualify a thesis in light of opposing sources

1 Key knowledge and worked examples

A synthesis thesis

feature	why
answers the prompt directly	the essay is scored on its position
is **your** claim	not a summary of one source
can be supported by at least three sources	the task requires source evidence
often qualified	sources usually disagree in part

From sources to thesis

1. Note what each source suggests.
2. Group sources that agree; note the ones that complicate.
3. Write a position that most sources support and that answers the complication.

Worked example

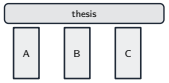
Prompt: should companies let employees work from home?

Notes: Source A, output rose at one firm; Source B, managers worry about teamwork; Source C, workers save two hours a day travelling; Source D, new staff learn less without colleagues nearby.

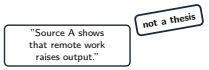
Thesis: "Companies should allow most staff to work from home for part of the week, because it raises output and gives workers time back, but new employees need regular days in the office to learn from colleagues."

2 Practice

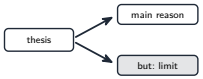
2.1 Identify two features of a strong synthesis thesis. [2]



2.2 Explain why "Source A shows that remote work raises output" is not a good synthesis thesis. [3]



2.3 Explain how an opposing source can make a synthesis thesis stronger. [3]



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3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Read the notes on four sources about remote work (composite sources written for practice).

Source A a firm's report: output rose 13% when staff worked from home.

Source B a manager survey: 60% worry about weaker teamwork.

Source C a transport study: remote workers saved about two hours a day of travel.

Source D a training study: new employees learned more slowly without colleagues nearby.

(a) Identify two sources that support remote work. [1]



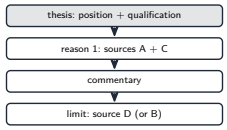
(b) Identify one source that complicates it. [1]

(c) Explain why Source D matters for a thesis about all employees. [1]

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3.2 Use Sources A–D in Question 3.1.

Write a synthesis thesis on whether companies should let employees work from home, and the body paragraph that supports its main reason. Use at least two sources and cite them. [6]



Solutions

Marking: **M1** a correct method, **A1** the correct answer, **B1** an independent mark.

Each answer shows the steps, then the **result**.

2.1

any two, for example: it answers the prompt directly; it is the writer's own claim, not a summary; it can be supported by several sources; it is qualified or recognizes complexity

2.2

it summarizes one source rather than stating the writer's position; it does not answer the question of whether companies should allow remote work; so it cannot organize an essay that uses several sources

2.3

the opposing source shows a real cost or limit; the writer can qualify the thesis to answer it; so the position is more precise and harder to attack, and shows the writer has weighed the evidence

3.1

(a) Source A and Source C

(b) Source B or Source D

(c) it shows the effect is not the same for everyone: new staff may need office time, so a thesis for all employees should be qualified

3.2

thesis: a clear, qualified synthesis thesis that answers the question

evidence: uses one source accurately with a citation; uses a second source accurately with a citation

commentary: commentary that explains how the sources support the main reason; addresses a complicating source (B or D) and links it to the qualification

sophistication: the thesis goes beyond any single source, for example by proposing a mixed model for different workers

model: "Companies should let most employees work from home for part of the week, but new staff need regular office days. The main reason is that remote work gives both firm and worker more: one firm's output rose 13% (Source A), and remote workers save about two hours a day of travel (Source C). Those hours are not lost to the company; they are hours a worker can spend working or resting instead of sitting in traffic. Yet new employees learn more slowly without colleagues nearby (Source D), so a mixed week protects the training that teams depend on."

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