

6.4 Writing a thesis statement

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ Total: 18 marks

Objective

Build the skills to write a **qualified** thesis that remains an argument.

You must be able to:

- write a thesis with a limiting clause that does real work
- avoid a qualification that empties the claim
- decide when a qualification belongs in the thesis and when in a paragraph
- test a qualified thesis for defensibility

1 Worked examples

Study these first. Each one shows the method for a task used later.

■ A limiting clause that works

“Later school start times help, **but only where transport can be rescheduled.**”
The clause names the condition, so the reader knows exactly what is being claimed and what would refute it.

■ Emptying the claim

“Later start times may help some students in some circumstances” claims nothing; there is no case it excludes. A qualification must still leave something at stake.

■ Where to put it

A condition central to the argument belongs in the thesis. A minor exception belongs in the paragraph where it arises; putting it in the thesis makes the essay look narrower than it is.

2 Practice

2.1 State what a good limiting clause does for the reader. [2]

2.2 State the test of whether a qualification has emptied a claim. [2]

2.3 Thesis: “Congestion charging may possibly help in certain places.”

(a) State the weakness. [1]

(b) Rewrite it as a qualified but defensible thesis. [2]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 A qualification belongs in the thesis when it is [1]

- | | |
|---|---|
| A | B |
| C | D |
- A a minor exception
B a condition central to the argument
C unrelated
D the writer’s opinion

3.2 A claim that excludes no case has been [1]

- | | |
|---|---|
| A | B |
| C | D |
- A properly qualified
B emptied
C strengthened
D narrowed usefully

3.3 Prompt: “Should exam results decide university entry?”

(a) Write a qualified thesis. [2]

(b) State what would refute it. [1]

3.4 Full free-response task. Some argue that social media platforms should be legally responsible for content their users post; others argue that this would make platforms

censor lawful speech to protect themselves.

Write an essay that argues a **qualified** position on platform liability. Your thesis must remain an argument: a qualification is not a refusal to take a side.

Marked on the AP 6-point rubric: **Row A — Thesis (1), Row B — Evidence and Commentary (4), Row C — Sophistication (1).**

[6]

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