

7.12 Developing a literary thesis statement

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 12 marks

Objective

Build the skills to write a thesis under **timed conditions** 限时.

You must be able to:

- state what a thesis expresses and requires
- explain what changes under time pressure
- state what the CED does not require
- produce a usable thesis quickly

1 Worked examples

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

■ The requirement

Unchanged: **an interpretation requiring defense through textual evidence and a line of reasoning, explained through commentary.**

■ Under pressure

The standard does not drop, but the drafting time does. A thesis written in two minutes must be arguable immediately; there is no time to discover what you think while writing.

■ What is not required

A thesis need not list points, elements or evidence—which is a relief under time pressure, since the list form takes longer and earns nothing.

■ Producing one fast

Read for one thing the text does repeatedly, then state what it achieves. "The story keeps X and Y apart, which makes Z look like..." is a thesis shape you can fill in from any passage.

2 Practice

2.1 State what a thesis expresses and requires. [2]

2.2 Explain what changes under time pressure. [2]

2.3 A thesis can be produced quickly.

(a) State the method. [2]

(b) State why the list form is a poor choice under pressure. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Under timed conditions the thesis standard [1]

- **A** stays the same
- **B** drops
- **C** rises
- **D** is waived

3.2 The list form of thesis is a poor choice because it [1]

- **A** takes longer and earns nothing
- **B** is forbidden
- **C** is too short
- **D** cannot be defended

3.3 You have two minutes to draft a thesis on an unseen passage.

(a) State what to look for first. [1]

(b) Explain how to turn it into a claim.

[2]

4 Go further

- work through the **7.12 Developing a literary thesis statement** lesson on the **Learn** page;
- read the **Short Fiction III** section of the AP English Literature handout on the **Know** page.

Solutions

2.1 an interpretation of a literary text requiring defense through textual evidence and a line of reasoning explained by commentary.

2.2 the standard does not drop but the drafting time does, so the thesis must be arguable immediately.

2.3 (a) find one thing the text does repeatedly and state what it achieves. (b) it takes longer to write and earns nothing.

3.1 A. unchanged.

3.2 A. slower and unrewarded.

3.3 (a) one thing the passage does repeatedly. (b) state what the repetition achieves for the reader in a sentence someone could disagree with.