

9.6 Developing a literary thesis statement

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 12 marks

Objective

Build the skills to write a **literary argument thesis** 文学论证论点.

You must be able to:

- state what a thesis expresses and requires
- explain the difficulty of a chosen-text essay
- state what the CED does not require
- make a thesis answer the prompt rather than the novel

1 Worked examples

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

■ The requirement

An interpretation of a literary text requiring defense through textual evidence and a line of reasoning, explained through commentary.

■ The chosen-text difficulty

When you choose the text, you arrive knowing it well —and the risk is writing what you know about the novel instead of what the prompt asked.

■ What is not required

No list of points, elements or evidence.

■ Answering the prompt

The thesis must contain the prompt's own terms, redescribed as a claim about this text. If the thesis could stand unchanged under a different prompt, it is answering the novel and not the question.

2 Practice

2.1 State what a thesis expresses and requires.

[2]

2.2 Explain the difficulty of a chosen-text essay. [2]

2.3 The thesis must answer the prompt.

(a) State the test. [2]

(b) State what the thesis must contain. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 A thesis that could stand unchanged under a different prompt is answering [1]

- **A** the novel, not the question
 - **B** the question
 - **C** both
 - **D** neither
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3.2 In a chosen-text essay the risk is writing [1]

- **A** what you know about the novel
 - **B** too little
 - **C** about the wrong book
 - **D** without evidence
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3.3 A student's thesis is a strong claim about a novel and does not use the prompt's terms.

(a) State the problem. [1]

(b) Explain the fix. [2]

4 Go further

- work through the **9.6 Developing a literary thesis statement** lesson on the **Learn** page;
- read the **Longer Fiction or Drama 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 writer knows the chosen text well, so the risk is writing what they know rather than what the prompt asked.

2.3 (a) ask whether the thesis could stand unchanged under a different prompt. (b) the prompt's own terms, redescribed as a claim about this text.

3.1 A. the novel.

3.2 A. what you know about the novel.

3.3 (a) it may be a good claim about the wrong question. (b) rewrite it so the prompt's terms appear as part of the claim, keeping the interpretation but pointing it at what was asked.