

Thesis Statements

GCSE English · Follows the national curriculum

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

1. Worked example

Turn a restated question into a thesis: 'How does Dickens present Fred?'

Step 1 · Weak

'Dickens presents Fred in many ways.'

Step 2 · Ask: what is Fred FOR?

A foil to Scrooge and a model of Christmas generosity.

Step 3 · Thesis

'Dickens presents Fred cheerful foil whose persistent kindness shows Scrooge, and the reader, what Christmas generosity looks like.'

Answer: A thesis built on the character's function.

Check: Arguable and specific.

2. Now try one with the steps

Check a thesis covers the whole text: 'Juliet is obedient to her parents.'

Step 1 · Test

Step 2 · Add development

Step 3 · Why it works

Answer:

3. Practice

Show your working. The marks tell you how much is expected.

1. What is a thesis statement? [1]

2. Where should your thesis appear? [1]

3. What does 'arguable' mean for a thesis? [1]

4. Why is 'In this essay I will...' a weak opening? [1]
-
-
5. What three questions can a strong thesis answer? [1]
-
-
6. Improve: 'Macbeth is about guilt.' [2]
-
-
7. Write a thesis for: 'How does Shakespeare present Tybalt?' [2]
-
-
8. Why should a thesis include a verb of development (e.g. grows, collapses)? [1]
-
-
9. Write a thesis for: 'How does Dickens present poverty?' [2]
-
-
10. What makes a thesis 'conceptual'? [2]
-
-
11. Write a conceptual thesis for: 'How does Stevenson present Utterson?' [2]
-
-
12. Use this thesis to plan three paragraph topics: 'Shakespeare presents Romeo's love, impulsive and ultimately fatal.' [3]
-
-
-
13. Why might a thesis that only fits the extract cause problems? [1]
-
-
14. Write a thesis for: 'How far is Macbeth presented tragic hero?' [2]
-
-

4. Before you hand it in

Restating the question: 'Dickens presents Scrooge in many ways.'

Say what the writer suggests and how.

A thesis that is just a fact: 'Macbeth kills Duncan.'

Make a claim about meaning: 'Shakespeare makes Duncan's murder the act that unravels Macbeth.'

A thesis that only fits one moment.

Add a verb of development.

Forgetting the thesis after the introduction.

Echo key words from your thesis in each paragraph's first sentence.