

Crafting a Thesis

A focal point of Grade 11 and 12 English is to develop your ability to craft a thesis relative to a given topic. This lecture will brief you on a few techniques you can use to aid in the process. Here are a few tips;

1. **A thesis is never a question** : Questions in academic essays are expected to be explored by the reader of the essay, but are not expected to be invoked by the author of the essay, rather it is that author that makes a statement, or a proposition, and then argues why its true *within* the essay.
2. **A thesis does not contain a list of your argument** : For example, "For political, economic, social and cultural reasons, communism collapsed in Eastern Europe" does a good job of "telegraphing" is a thesis that makes an assertion towards what the author believes is the reason behind the communist collapse in Eastern Europe. However, the thesis should **should not** list the primary arguments that the author will use throughout the essay, rather he should concise the *modifier* by instead stating; "The governmental infrastructure within Eastern Europe lead to the demise of its communist constitution".
3. **A thesis should not be ambiguous, subjective or confrontational** : For example, "Communism collapsed in Eastern Europe because communism is evil." is a weak thesis since it contains a subjective argument that could potentially conflict with a reader that happens to disagree with your opinion and turn them away. This also paints you as judgmental rather than rational and critical.
4. **A thesis should have an arguable claim or proposition** : "While cultural forces contributed to the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, the disintegration of economies played the key role in driving its decline" This thesis is precise, rational and arguable. It integrates the central proposition the author will attempt to prove within the essay as well as a few of the arguments that the author will choose as a focal point. It makes it crystal clear to the reader that the author will talk about both aspects of culture and economics, while perhaps emphasizing the role that economics played in diminishing the communist state.
5. **A thesis should be clear and specific** : Avoid using ambiguous, general term, modifiers and verbs when crafting your thesis. "Communism collapsed in Eastern Europe because of the ruling elite's inability to address the economic concerns of the people" is much more precise and clear than "Communism collapsed due to societal discontent."

Citation:

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