THE THESIS

The thesis is the single most important part of your essay. It is the roadmap that **guides your writing** and **directs your audience**.

* The thesis **CANNOT BE** a restatement of the topic
* It is a *judgment* **ABOUT** the topic made by *analyzing* a text
* It generally deals with the ***causes* or *effects*** of a topic (it answers questions such as **why**, **how**, **by what** **process**, **what are the specific results/consequences**, etc.?)
* *The topic is not used to discuss the text;* ***the text is used to discuss the top*ic**.  Therefore the thesis uses the text to show a **deeper understanding** of the topic (ex. what does the text suggest about how insecurity affects **people**; or what does the text say about how freedom could be lost by **the individual**)
* So, the text is used to **support** and **illuminate** your **discussion** of a topic

One way to approach a thesis is to consider the **character’s journey or arc**:

* *Who is the* ***character****?*
* *What is the* ***situation/conflict/circumstance*** *that the character faces?*
* *What* ***choice/response*** *does the character make?*
* *How does the character* ***change*** *or what is the* ***consequence*** *of the character’s choice?*

*Discuss the idea(s) developed by the text creator in your chosen text about the* ***role adversity plays*** *in* ***shaping an individual’s identity.***

***Through the character of Blanche, Tennessee Williams develops the idea that a sensitive individual, when faced with adversity, may seek to escape through the world of imagination to find solace, but this course of action will inevitably cause the loss of personal identity.***

Your thesis should contain a: **person**, **problem**, **response**, **consequence**

**Thesis Statement Equation**

| Through the character of\_\_\_\_\_ | author | * suggests * demonstrates proves * illustrates etc. | **Key**  **Word(s)**  **Cause** | * causes * forces * enables * allows etc. | **Key**  **Word(s)**  **Effect** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |

*Discuss the idea(s) developed by William Shakespeare in Othello about an individual’s* ***responses*** *to* ***circumstances beyond familiar experience****.*

This translates into a statement like this:

Weak***: Through the character of Othello, Shakespeare suggests that unfamiliar circumstance can cause an individual to gravitate towards the familiar.***

Better***: Through the character of Othello, Shakespeare suggests that unfamiliar circumstance can cause an individual to gravitate towards the familiar; however, if his trust is misplaced, it can lead to his destruction.***

Strong***: Through the character of Othello, Shakespeare suggests that unfamiliar circumstance can cause an individual to gravitate towards the familiar; however, if his trust is misplaced, his perceptions can become skewed, his judgements unsound to the point that he throws away what he truly values*.**



*When an individual (experiences/faces\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) he may respond by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ultimately leading to\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.*

*Discuss the idea(s) developed by the text creator in your chosen text about the* ***role adversity plays*** *in* ***shaping an individual’s identity.***

* Lady Macbeth desires to help her husband
* Responds by trying to block all feminine feelings and response (crosses an emotional boundary) **(adversity)**
* She has some initial success (she helps Macbeth accomplish his goals)
* Ultimately she has an emotional breakdown ending in her death **(identity)**

**Cause** – wants to help husband

**Effect** – sacrifices part of herself/identity

**Effect** – some success

**Effect** – destruction of her identity

**Through the character of Lady Macbeth, Shakespeare suggests that when facing adversity an individual may sacrifice part of her identity in order to support another. Although she may find some initial success, the cost of her sacrifice will ultimately lead to a breakdown of identity.**

**Sperling’s Quick and Dirty Guide to Writing an Introduction**

1. **Something fairly obvious that your audience will agree with (x2)**

Hardships is a part of the human experience. When those we care about face adversity, it is hard to stand by and watch. More often than not, we will seek to help those who struggle.

1. **Bring in the exception; this shows you are thinking beyond the obvious**☺

However, there are times when a person’s desire to help another crosses an emotional boundary and can have a detrimental effect on her identity.

1. **Introduce the text. “*Hey this reminds me of…”* (Transition)**

It is this scenario that William Shakespeare explores in his play Macbeth.

1. **A summary of the text (2-3 sentences)**

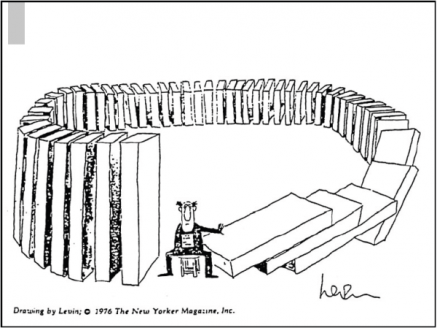
The play describes Macbeth, a noble warrior, who, though ambitious, does not act until he is encouraged to pursue his desires to be king by his wife Lady Macbeth. L. Macbeth knows her husband lacks to intent to do what is needed to become king, so she attempts to shut out her femininity so that she may help him carry out the bloody deed, an action that eventually sets her on a path of destruction.

1. **Now, transition to your thesis statement**

**Through the character of Lady Macbeth**, Shakespeare suggests that when facing adversity an individual may sacrifice part of her identity in order to support another. Although she may find some initial success, the cost of her sacrifice will ultimately lead to a breakdown of identity.

Hardships are a part of the human experience that, although we may try to ignore or avoid, when we do face them, can impact our character in positive ways. Yet when those we care about face adversity, it is hard to stand by and watch. More often than not, we will seek to help those who fall short of their goals. However, there are times when a person’s desire to help another crosses an emotional boundary and can have a detrimental effect on her identity. It is this scenario that William Shakespeare explores in his play Macbeth. The play tells of Macbeth, a noble warrior, who, though ambitious, does not act until he is encouraged to pursue his desires to be king by his wife, Lady Macbeth. Lady Macbeth knows her husband lacks intent to do what is needed to take his place as king, so she attempts to block out her femininity so that she may help him carry out the bloody deed, an action that eventually sets her on the path of emotional destruction. *Through the character of Lady Macbeth, Shakespeare suggests that when facing adversity an individual may sacrifice part of her identity in order to support another1. Although she may find initial success2, the cost of her sacrifice will ultimately lead to the breakdown of identity3.*

**The Chain Reaction of Circumstance** 



**-------------- Ambition can lead to destruction ----------------**

***1*A person may sacrifice part of her identity to support another**



***2*She may find some success**



***3*T*he cost of her sacrifice will ultimately lead to a breakdown of identity***

***1*Lady Macbeth call on spirits to block out femininity so that she may compensate for her husband lack of action.**

* + L. Macbeth fears his “nature; it is too full o’ the milk of human kindness to catch the nearest way;/Art thou not without ambition, but without the illness should attend it” 1.5.16-19
  + unsex me here,

* + make thick my blood;/Stop up the access and passage to remorse,/That no compunctious visitings of nature/Shake my fell purpose,

* + Come to my woman's breasts,/And take my milk for gall,

***2*Lady Macbeth’s sacrifice of her feminine nature allows her to carry out the deed that makes her husband king.**

***3*As Macbeth’s power grows and he pushes Lady Macbeth aside, the cost of her choices begin to surface in her actions and her eventual demise.**