

Argumentative and Persuasive Essays

In argumentative or persuasive essays, writers state a thesis and then support it with evidence from the text. In literary analysis, the thesis is an interpretation of a literary element such as theme, imagery or symbolism. An analysis is not simply a summary, it must have a point to support. The following is an example of thesis statement from a student essay:

To the contrast between Tom's dream and his life, the chimneysweeper convinces the reader of the immoral nature of child labor.

This thesis identifies a specific theme from the poem: Child Labor and it offers us a specific interpretation of the message. After completing this lecture, view the sample student paper on William Blake's *The Chimney Sweeper*. In writing your essay about a poem, there are some areas to consider. Your introduction should engage the reader with a strong opener such as a quote or question, and then it should present the author and poem you will be discussing before moving onto your thesis statement. The body paragraphs should develop, explain and support the thesis. Direct quotations should be used to support your claims, but remember to explain how they relate to your point. A strong conclusion should summarize the key points of your essay but it should also answer the so-what question. What is the relevance and significance of the analysis? What final thought do I want to leave my reader with at the end of the discussion? To review, being persuasive when you write about literature requires considering the reader and being engaging in the introduction and conclusion, establishing a clear main point, your thesis statement to analyze the poem, quoting from the text and explaining how the quotations support the thesis, summarizing your ideas and communicating how your argument is significant to understanding the poem.