

# Thesis Statements and Writing Tips

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Soc Sci 172AW

# How to Refer to African Americans

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- Acceptable
  - Plural: African Americans, African-Americans, blacks, black Americans, black people
  - Singular: an African American, a black person
- Unacceptable
  - Plural: the blacks
  - Singular: a black
- Never acceptable (unless quoting historical writings):
  - Negroes, colored people



# How to Refer to Native Americans

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- Acceptable
  - Native Americans, American Indians, Indigenous peoples, Indigenous Americans
  - If known, refer to the specific tribe
- Unacceptable (unless quoting historical writings)
  - Indians, Natives

# How to Refer to Women

- Is she/are they over 18?
  - Yes → Woman/women
  - No → girl/girls
- What about groups that include both?
  - → Girls and women
- **Always wrong** (as a noun)
  - Female/females
  - Male/males

Woman	Man
Girl	Boy
_____	Guy

# Thesis Statements

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- What do thesis statements do?
  - Introduce the topic
  - Tell the reader YOUR position/make an argument
- What is an argument?
  - A claim that the reader can accept or reject



## Thesis Statement, cont.

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- Not a thesis statement: “I will analyze Bell and Wood’s different views about the Constitution.”
  - Cannot tell which view you support
  - Does not include a claim that can be agreed or disagreed with

# Thesis Statement, cont.

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- Thesis statement: “Despite significant shortcomings in the American Revolution, such as prioritizing the interests of wealthy elites and keeping slavery, its revolutionary ideals of liberty and equality have allowed these initial failings to be overcome.”
  - Can tell my position: US society has become more equal and free over time
  - Can be disagreed with: We have not overcome the inequality that began with the Founding

# Thesis Statements, cont.

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- Where to put the thesis statement?
  - Generally located at the end of the first paragraph
- Why is it important?
  - Structures the paper as a whole
  - In other words, each paragraph should provide evidence to support your main argument



# Topic Sentences

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- Location
  - First sentence of each body paragraph
- Function
  - Gives the main argument of the paragraph
  - Relates to the thesis statement
  - Determines information within the paragraph

# Concluding Sentences

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- Location
  - Last sentence of each body paragraph
- Function
  - Reiterates the main argument of the paragraph
  - Explains how the paragraph supports the thesis statement

# Introductions



Larger themes raised by the  
topic

Connection to  
specific topic

Thesis



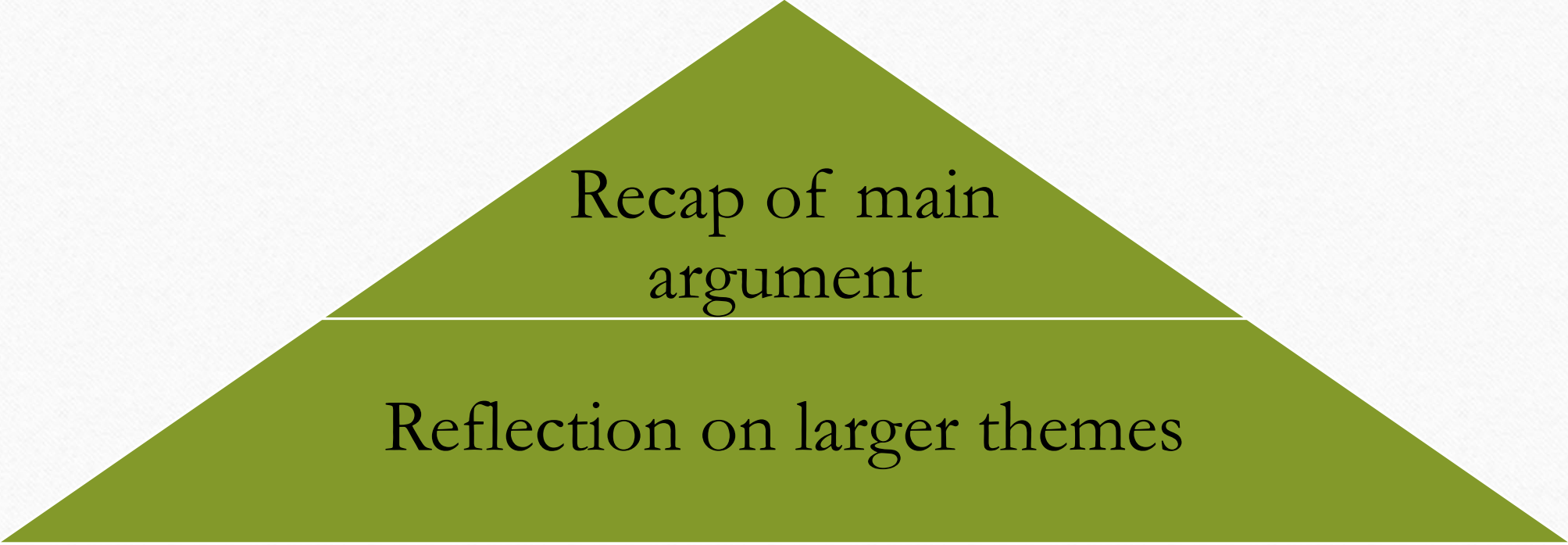
# Introductions (Example)

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- Since the Revolution, America has prided itself on being a nation of equality, freedom, and justice. That the United States sees itself as a country based on the equality of people from diverse cultural backgrounds can be seen in the oft-repeated idea that the US is a “melting pot.” However, this identity ignores the ways in which America has developed from racist and undemocratic undertones that marginalized minorities after the American Revolution.

# Conclusions

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Recap of main  
argument

Reflection on larger themes

# Punctuation and Citations

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- Where to put punctuation with quotes? BEFORE the quote marks
  - **Incorrect:** “the contest itself is a struggle between members of an upper class”, argues Zinn (2005, 84).
  - **Correct:** “the contest itself is a struggle between members of an upper class,” argues Zinn (2005, 84).
  - **Incorrect:** In “Give Us the Freedom Intended Us”, Frederick Douglass argues
  - **Correct:** In “Give Us the Freedom Intended Us,” Frederick Douglass argues



# Punctuation and Citations, cont.

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- Punctuation and parenthetical citations:
  - **Incorrect:** “the contest itself is a struggle between members of an upper class.”  
(Zinn 2005, 84)
  - **Incorrect:** “the contest itself is a struggle between members of an upper class.”  
(Zinn 2005, 84).
  - **Correct:** “the contest itself is a struggle between members of an upper class”  
(Zinn 2005, 84).