

Title: Writing Effective Thesis Statements and Introductory Paragraphs for Research Papers

Grade Ranges:

K-4
 5-8
 9-12

Subject Tag:

Writing Guides: Composition Writing
Writing Guides: Research Papers

Synopsis:

The thesis statement is the focus of a research paper. Students frequently have a difficult time structuring a thesis statement that they can prove in their papers. This lesson helps students learn to write more effective thesis statements and then incorporate them into a strong introductory paragraph. Students do much of the lesson in pairs. Any part of the activity can be modified to be completed within 30 minutes.

Keywords:

thesis statements, introductory paragraphs, universal statement, bridge statement

Body:

After students have completed some initial reading and browsing on the topic of their paper, they need to learn to write an effective thesis statement in order to define the paper's focus and content. Give each student a note card. Ask students to write a thesis focus, not necessarily a complete sentence but an idea. Then ask them to decide whether their paper is an exploration, a comparison, an argument, or a problem with a solution. Remind students that even exploration and comparison thesis statements should attempt to prove something about a topic. Once students have determined this, ask them to write a possible thesis statement on a note card and then exchange cards with a peer. Students should then help each other revise and refine their thesis statements. These can then be handed in for you to check. The next step is to create a powerful introductory paragraph. Model the following diagram on the board or overhead or with handouts for your students.

The introduction contains three sentences:

1. A universal statement
2. A bridge statement
3. A thesis statement

Students already have their thesis statements, so they should write a complete paragraph that contains all three components. After they finish writing the paragraphs, ask them to exchange paragraphs with a peer. Give each student three different colored pencils and have them underline the thesis in red, the universal in blue, and the bridge in green (or whatever colors you choose). The pairs should help each other use powerful words that

have a clear purpose. Collect the paragraphs from the students.

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to develop effective thesis statements.
2. Students will be able to write and rewrite their work through a writing process.
3. Students will be able to construct an introductory paragraph containing a thesis statement.

Standards:

NY: 1. Students will read, write, and speak for information and understanding.
3. Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.

NYC: E1C: Read and comprehend informational materials. **E2A:** Produce a report of information. **E4B:** Analyze and subsequently revise work to improve its clarity and effectiveness.

CT: 1. Reading and Responding. Students will read and respond in individual, literal, critical and evaluative ways to literary, informational and persuasive texts. **2.** Producing Texts. Students will produce written, oral and visual texts to express, develop and substantiate ideas and experiences.

NJ: 3.3. All students will write in clear, concise, organized language that varies in content and form for different audiences and purposes. **3.4.** All students will read various materials and texts with comprehension and critical analysis.

Prerequisite Skills:

1. Students need to read information on their topic before they can begin to generate thesis statements.

Time Required:

one class period

Technology and Materials Needed:

1. Colored pencils
2. Note cards

Assessment Criteria:

1. Note card with thesis statement
2. Finished introductory paragraph

Recommended Lesson Plan Review Date:

NA

Review Comments:

NA

