Definitions:
A **thesis statement** narrows the subject to a specific topic, states a claim that can be debated, and helps a reader understand a topic more thoroughly.

A **topic sentence** summarizes the main idea of a paragraph by making a claim for one topic.

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**Part I: Writing Thesis Statements and Topic Sentences**

Directions: Read the writing prompt and then decide which statement would make the best thesis statement.

**Example:** Junk food in schools should be prohibited because it causes health problems, experts and doctors recommend it, and students need to eat healthy foods.

1. **Subject:** Junk food in schools
2. **Claim:** should be prohibited
3. **3 supporting details:** health problems, experts and doctors recommend it, and students need to eat healthy foods.

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1. **Writing Prompt:** Why is education important?

   a. There are three reasons why you should have a good education.

   b. A good education will help you get a good job.

   c. Education is important because it provides you with survival skills, social skills, and special skills needed to be successful in life.

   d. Education is important because with an education you can be anything you want to be.
2. **Writing Prompt**: Explain why people should not want to smoke cigarettes.

   a. Smoking often leads to cancer, causes bad breath, and stains a person’s teeth.

   b. Cigarettes cost too much money.

   c. Last year my uncle was diagnosed with lung cancer after having smoked cigarettes for 18 years.

   d. Why would someone want to develop such a bad habit like smoking?

3. **Writing prompt**: What is your favorite day of the week and why?

   a. Saturday is the best day of the week.

   b. I love Saturdays for so many reasons.

   c. I think everyone agrees that everyday should be Saturday because it is almost everyone’s favorite day of the week.

   d. Saturday is my favorite day of the week because I can sleep in late, shop all day, and spend a lot of time with family and friends.

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**Part II: Identifying Weak and Strong Thesis Statements**

Directions: Read the following thesis statements and determine if the thesis is weak or strong. Write S on the line if it is strong or W if it is weak. Revise each identified weak thesis by making it stronger.

*Example: Edgar Allan Poe is a good author. ____W____

*Revision: Edgar Allan Poe is the most influential Gothic author because of his ability to create horror and suspense.

*Note:

*A strong thesis statement…

  - Offers a clear, specific point of view
• Is debatable, meaning a reader could oppose or dispute the position
• Offers some evidence to support the opinion

Example: “School uniforms are beneficial for high school students because they create a sense of unity, may cut down on bullying, and are more affordable for parents.”

*A weak thesis statement…

• Is often too broad or ambiguous, making it difficult to understand the position.
• Lacks evidence.
• Attempts to argue more than one point of view
• Presents facts rather than a debatable opinion

Example: “Technology is helpful” is a weak thesis because it is not clear about what kind of technology is helpful, who technology helps, or why it is beneficial.

1. Participating in volunteer work is essential for the development of strong character. ______
If you identified this thesis as weak, write your revision here:

2. Socialism is the best form of government because it will promote equal opportunities for all citizens. ______
If you identified this thesis as weak, write your revision here:

3. Because Weight Loss Fast promotes rapid weight loss that results in the loss of muscle mass, it is dangerous to customers. ______
If you identified this thesis as weak, write your revision here:

4. Television influences children. ______
If you identified this thesis as weak, write your revision here:

5. Playing team sports has many benefits. ______
If you identified this thesis as weak, write your revision here:
6. The Harry Potter novels and films have many similarities and differences. ______
If you identified this thesis as weak, write your revision here:

7. Body language plays an important role in human communication. ______
If you identified this thesis as weak, write your revision here:

8. The government must enact laws to protect the endangered white rhino. ______
If you identified this thesis as weak, write your revision here:

9. Students should not have to wear school uniforms. ______
If you identified this thesis as weak, write your revision here:

10. Community members should work to give the homeless access to essential services in order to improve quality of life in our community. ______
If you identified this thesis as weak, write your revision here:

Part III. Choosing an Appropriate Topic Sentence

Directions: Read each paragraph below and then choose the topic sentence that best fits.

1. _____________________________. Neither teams looked excited to be playing. Everyone came dragging onto the field. Then the visiting team scored four touchdowns in the first quarter, while the home team scored nothing. During the halftime show, the band played songs nobody knew and the cheerleaders forgot their cheer. Hopefully next week’s game is more exciting.

   a. I hate football.

   b. I never want to go to another football game ever because my school’s team is bad.

   c. Last night’s football game was a bore.
2. _____________________________. I went to Pembroke Mall. There I bought sneakers and several outfits. I also went to the flea market where I bought several souvenirs for my friends. It was the largest indoor flea market I have ever seen.

Finally, I went to the swap meet where I got really great deals. I wish I had more time to shop.

   a. While in Miami I did lots of shopping.
   b. The mall was the most exciting part of my trip.
   c. My friends and I partied and shopped all weekend.

3. _____________________________. I enjoy riding around to look at the bright lights and beautifully decorated houses. I also love listening to the holiday tunes which always lift my spirits. The thing I like most about Christmas, however, is that because it is the season of giving and sharing everyone always seems to be in such a good mood. There is no other season like Christmas.

   a. I can’t wait until Christmas.
   b. December is my favorite month.
   c. I love the Christmas season.

4. _____________________________. She always buys me things that she can hardly afford. For example, when we were younger, she bought a pair of really cool sneakers with her last $50. She also took the blame most times I did something wrong so that I wouldn’t have to get in trouble. One time when she saved me from trouble, she got put on punishment for a month, but she never told on me. My sister has taught me to be more loving and less selfish.

   a. My sister is the most generous person I know.
   b. Nobody has a sister like mine.
   c. My friends admire my sister.

Part IV: Writing an Introduction and Identifying the Thesis
Directions: Write an introduction paragraph for the following topic. **Be sure to Underline your thesis statement.**

**Writing Prompt:** Who is the person you most admire? Why?

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