

# Answer the Question: Writing Proper Thesis Statements

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## Overview

In social studies, a strong thesis statement is the first step to a well-written essay. Answering the essay question is the essential aspect of a thesis, yet many students struggle to complete this necessary part. Even if many of my students may be great at analyzing and interpreting different sources in their writing, it doesn't work if their essays don't form together coherently with a proper thesis as the central argument.

### Objective:

Students will be able to improve their writing of thesis statements— and thus their essay writing skills overall— within four months (January-April 2016) through writing DBQs, BCRs, drills, and exit tickets.

### Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

## Methods

### Student Population:

24 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Students in Honors World History.  
10 African American Students  
1 IEP T.L. ADHD  
1 ESOL

### Based line Data:

Students completed a Document Based Question (DBQ) Essay prompt in the beginning of the school year. It was the first time these students were writing a DBQ and they really struggled with every aspect of writing the essay. Many could analyze the individual documents, but they could not bring together their information to write an essay. Thus, I determined the first step for these students to grow as writers is to learn how to form a thesis statement.

### Thesis Statement Rubric:

Scored out of 8 points  
2 points for restating the question  
2 points for proposing an opinion  
2 points for grouping examples  
2 points for clarity and format.

### Target:

All Students achieve at least 6/8 points for the Thesis statements of their written assignments. This is the minimum needed of a thesis statement to write a well-formatted essay.

### Assessments:

Pre-Assessment – Unit 3 BCR  
Midpoint Assessment – First Draft DBQ  
Final Assessment – Final Draft DBQ

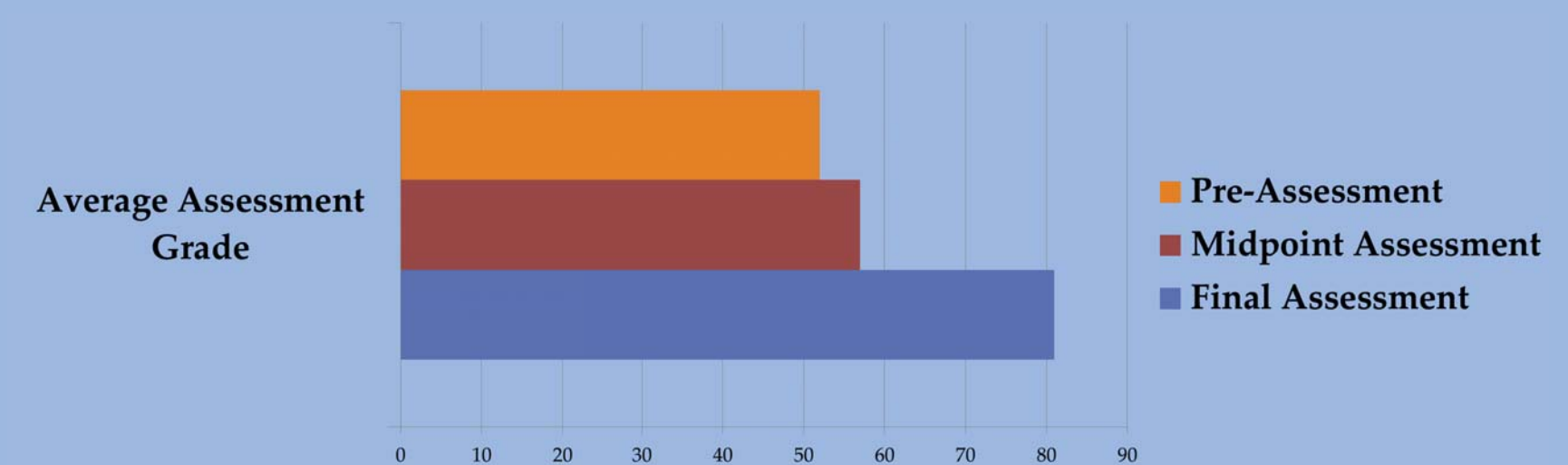
### Interventions:

Students completed many drills and exit tickets. These writing assignments varied from simple question and short responses, to specifically formatting a thesis statement or analyzing a reading to determine the thesis statement. Students were also given rubrics, revisions, and one-on-one teacher instruction on how to improve their writing.

## Results

The following chart displays the students scores on their thesis statements assessments and the graph displays the students' average score on the entire writing assessment. Overall, 18/24 students reached the target score of 6 or higher, that is 75% of the student group. The students that did not meet the target still improved based on their primary thesis score. Also, the average overall assessment grades increased as well. The average of the Pre-Assessment was 51%, The Midpoint assessment was 57%, and the final Assessment was 81%.

Student	Pre-Assessment	Midpoint Assessment	Final Assessment	Target Met
A1M	4	1	6	YES
B1M	3	0	6	YES
C1S	2	4	6	YES
D1S	3	6	8	YES
D2M	0	0	4	NO
F1S	2	5	7	YES
G1M	2	4	7	YES
G2M	3	0	5	NO
H1M	0	0	4	NO
H2S	4	4	8	YES
I1M	2	0	6	YES
K1S	3	4	8	YES
K2S	4	6	6	YES
L1S	4	5	7	YES
L2S	0	8	8	YES
M1S	2	5	7	YES
M2S	4	4	6	YES
O1S	2	2	5	NO
R1M	4	0	6	YES
R2M	0	0	4	NO
S1M	1	0	3	NO
T1M	2	0	6	YES
V1M	2	4	6	YES
W1S	2	4	7	YES



## Conclusions

Scaffolding lessons, providing various writing tasks, and working one-on-one with students giving revisions allowed students to increase their skills in writing thesis statements. Not only did students' thesis statement become clearer, but they're overall skills in writing essays increased as well. For the students that did not reach the target to approve, it may be necessary to provide even more one-on-one instruction and closer guidance. Overall, this SLO was successful.