

Monday, April 24th, 2017

◎ HOMEWORK:

- 1 Draft your research thesis and bring to class tomorrow for workshopping.
- 2 Read your lit. circle book for first meeting next Wednesday 5/3

◎ WORD!: **veracity** (noun): conformity to facts; accuracy; habitual truthfulness.

- EX: Voters should be concerned about his veracity and character.

◎ AGENDA:

- Developing a research thesis (The Sheridan Baker Thesis Machine)

How to Create an Effective Research Thesis

What is your research thesis?

- The **answer to your research question** based on all of the research you've done!
- This answer should reflect **your position** on your research topic.

The Sheridan Baker Thesis Machine (Adapted):

- This is only one type of thesis “making” and it works especially well for this type of research.
 - Different types of thesis statements suit different kinds of writing.
 - For example: your literary analysis thesis statements that were not based on a research question needed to be structured and formulated differently.
- Today’s method will offer you an effective method to begin thesis development.
- Thesis writing is a process. *You will need to revise and edit it several times until you have your final, polished thesis. Today is just the starting point!*

The Sheridan Baker Thesis Machine (Adapted)

- These are the major components to this thesis writing method:
 - ① Question (*topic and issue*)
 - ② Position (*your answer*)
 - ③ “Because” Clause (*your rationale*)
 - ④ “Although” Clause (*the other side*)

1. Question (topic and issue)

- ◎ State the general topic of the paper.
 - EX: high school grades

- ◎ Recognize and state the specific issue you will address by formulating a question about this topic.
 - EX: Are grades necessary in high school?

2. Position (your answer)

- ◎ Give your position on the issue of your question.
 - EX: Grades are not necessary in high school.

3. “Because” Clause (rationale)

- ◎ Add 1-3 main reasons in a “because” clause.
- ◎ By using a “because” clause, you can convert your answer into a sentence that states your position on the issue while providing three rationales, or reasons, for your position.
- **EX:** Grades are unnecessary in high school because they reduce a student's interest in authentic learning, they are subjective according to an individual teacher's preferences, and they encourage cheating.

4. “Although” Clause (the other side)

- Refine the rough thesis by adding the counter-argument in an "although clause" (these are conditions or exceptions to your position, or the other side of the issue.)
 - EX: Although many teachers and schools administrators argue that grades are a legitimate way to evaluate student progress, grades are unnecessary in high school because they reduce a student's interest in authentic learning, they are subjective according to an individual teacher's preferences, and they encourage cheating.

Example #1:

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- ① Question
 - ① Has Thailand progressed economically?
 - ② Position
 - ② Thailand has progressed economically in certain areas, but still trails behind other developing nations.
 - ③ “Because” Clause
 - ③ Economic progress in Thailand is stunted because its educational system is poor, it has environmental problems, and there are many failures in its management of economic resources.
 - ④ “Although” Clause
 - ④ Although Thailand has progressed economically in certain areas, its progress is stunted because its educational system is poor, it has environmental problems, and there are many failures in its management of economic resources.

Example #2:

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|---|
| ① | Question | ① | What political and economic factors have had the most significant impact on the experience of Syrian immigrants in the U.S.? |
| ② | Position | ② | The growth of ISIS in Syria has had the most significant impact on the experiences of Syrian immigrants in the U.S. |
| ③ | “Because” Clause | ③ | The growth of ISIS in Syria has had the greatest impact on Syrian immigrants because it has caused many Americans to view Syrian refugees with fear and trepidation, ultimately limiting the resources, help, and compassionate treatment that they receive in the U.S. |
| ④ | “Although” Clause | ④ | While the wrecked Syrian economy has made it difficult for Syrian immigrants in the U.S. to gain financial stability, the growth of ISIS in Syria has had a greater impact on the experience of these immigrants because it has caused many Americans to view Syrian refugees with fear and trepidation, ultimately limiting the resources, help, and compassionate treatment that they receive in the U.S. |

Now, let's evaluate some theses...

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1. The lack of educational opportunities has negatively impacted Ethiopians because they are unable to read and write.
 2. Limited access to education in Ethiopia has shaped the experience of Ethiopian immigrants.
 3. The lack of educational opportunities in Ethiopia has had a negative effect on Ethiopian immigrants in the U.S. because without literacy skills such as basic reading and writing in their native language they have a harder time learning English, which ultimately has a negative impact on their ability to get jobs, gain financial stability, and contribute to the economy here in the U.S.
 4. A lack of educational opportunities in Ethiopia has shaped the experience of Ethiopians in the U.S. because it has negatively impacted their ability to obtain jobs in the United States.

Example #1 Thesis:

The lack of educational opportunities has negatively impacted Ethiopians because they are unable to read and write.

A. What do you think of this thesis?

Example #2 Thesis:

Limited access to education in Ethiopia has shaped the experience of Ethiopian immigrants.

A. What do you think of this thesis?

Example #3 Thesis:

The lack of educational opportunities in Ethiopia has had a negative effect on Ethiopian immigrants in the U.S. because without literacy skills such as basic reading and writing in their native language they have a harder time learning English, which ultimately has a negative impact on their ability to get jobs, gain financial stability, and contribute to the economy here in the U.S.

A. What do you think of this thesis?

Example #4 Thesis:

A lack of educational opportunities in Ethiopia has shaped the experience of Ethiopians in the U.S. because it has negatively impacted their ability to obtain jobs in the United States.

A. What do you think of this thesis?

So, what are the criteria for an effective thesis?

1. Clarity of word choice

- Consider your audience!

2. A clearly defined topic

- This must be suitable to the length and medium of the assignment

3. A strong position about the topic

- Your position should not be obvious → Ex: Women are important in society

4. It's arguable

- It is something about which reasonably informed people can disagree.

Now it's your turn...

Using the Sheridan Baker thesis machine, take your research question and go through the 3 steps to draft a working thesis:

- ① Question (topic and issue)
- ② Position (your answer)
- ③ “Because” Clause (rationale)

Once you have a draft you feeling confident about, swap with your peers to get feedback and revise as needed until it meets our criteria.

****Remember:** First drafts are ALWAYS terrible—they’re supposed to be. The goal is to leave class today with a solid starting point, but it doesn’t have to be perfect yet.