**Research Paper**

**Topic → RQ → Thesis Statement**

A thesis statement should be developed after you have explored your research question, and have done enough research to confidently answer that question. A quality thesis statement should be clear, definitive and backed up by research. The goal of this paper is for you to answer a historical question with your thesis statement and back it up using evidence throughout the body of the paper that relates back to your thesis. Your thesis statement is the anchor of your paper. It should explicitly state to the reader what you intend to cover in the paper.

**Quality Examples (**thesis statement in **bold)**

The justification and necessity regarding the decision to drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and

Nagasaki has long been subject to debate. In the end, there were other means of defeating Japan that would have been less costly and more humane than dropping the atomic bomb. **Ultimately,**

**President Truman’s decision to use the atomic bomb was unnecessary and abhorrent.**

During the second half of the twentieth century, the United States and Soviet Union engaged in a

political, economic, technologic and military rivalry. During this Cold War, both countries

attempted to promote and expand their ideologies. By 1991, the Soviet Union collapsed, and the

United States of America was left as the lone world super power. **It is clear that the policies of the Reagan Administration were the most important factor regarding the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the United States victory in The Cold War.**

**How do I know if my thesis is strong?**

*Do I answer the question?* Re-reading the question prompt after constructing a working

thesis can help you fix an argument that misses the focus of the question.

*Have I taken a position that others might challenge or oppose?* If your thesis simply states

facts that no one would, or even could, disagree with, it's possible that you are simply

providing a summary, rather than making an argument.

*Is my thesis statement specific enough?* Thesis statements that are too vague often do not

have a strong argument. If your thesis contains words like "good" or "successful," see if you

could be more specific: *why* is something "good"; *what specifically* makes something

"successful"?

*Does my thesis pass the "So what?" test?* If a reader's first response is, "So what?" then you

need to clarify, to forge a relationship, or to connect to a larger issue.

*Does my essay support my thesis specifically and without wandering?* If your thesis and the

body of your essay do not seem to go together, one of them has to change. It's o.k. to change

your working thesis to reflect things you have figured out in the course of writing your paper.

Remember, always reassess and revise your writing as necessary.

*Does my thesis pass the "how and why?" test?* If a reader's first response is "how?" or

"why?" your thesis may be too open-ended and lack guidance for the reader. See what you

can add to give the reader a better take on your position.

http://www.procon.org/sourcefiles/schools/glastonburyhighschool.pdf