Student\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Mrs. Kimbrough

English II (Period)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Building a Claim**

An **argumentative** paper makes a claim about a topic and justifies the claim with specific evidence. The goal of argumentative writing is to convince the reader that the claim is true based on the evidence provided and to negate the opposing viewpoint.

1. **Write your research paper’s general subject in the blank below:**

Example: mandatory education

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1. **What specific controversy (disagreement) about that subject will you research?**

Example: whether students should be allowed to drop out of high school

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1. **Which position will your paper take on the controversy? You may not have chosen a side yet. This is the time to do so!**

Example: Every American student must continue to attend high school until he or she earns enough credits to graduate.

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1. **Why does this matter? Think about what you’ve read about your topic over the last couple of days. Why is this important to *everybody*, not just the person or group mentioned in the topic?**

Example: Having an educated population will make our country stronger.

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**Writing a Thesis Statement**

Your thesis statement should have three parts:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Part 1 makes the topic SPECIFIC.** | Exactly who? or When? or How many? or Which ones? or Where?... |
| **Part 2 identifies the POSITION your paper will take.** | ...does or does not or should or should not or must or must not… |
| **Part 3 explains the significance of the topic (WHY)** | proving that… or resulting in… or so that… or demonstrating… or in order to… |

Example (based on the examples on Page 1 of this handout):

(Part 1: Who?)

* Every American

(Part 2 shows my point of view about the subject)

* must attend high school until earning enough credits for graduation

(Part 3 says why it matters.)

* resulting in an educated population that will make our country stronger.

Now put it all together:

* Every American must attend high school until earning enough credits for graduation, resulting in an educated population that will make our country stronger.

**More examples of argumentative thesis statements:**

* High school graduates should be required to take a year off to pursue community service projects before entering college in order to increase their maturity and global awareness.
* The U.S. government must cover the costs associated with AIDS testing and treatment so that the spread of the potentially deadly disease will be prevented.

**Form a thesis statement:** Using the formula above and the answers to the questions on Page 1 of this handout, write a thesis statement for the controlling idea of your research paper. Avoid using personal pronouns such as *I, me, my, we, us,* or *our* since this research paper will be about what the research shows, not about your (or my!) opinion. Revise your thesis statement until it says exactly what your research can prove.

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