

Standard Guidance: W.1 & 2, Grades 6-12

Establishing a Thesis

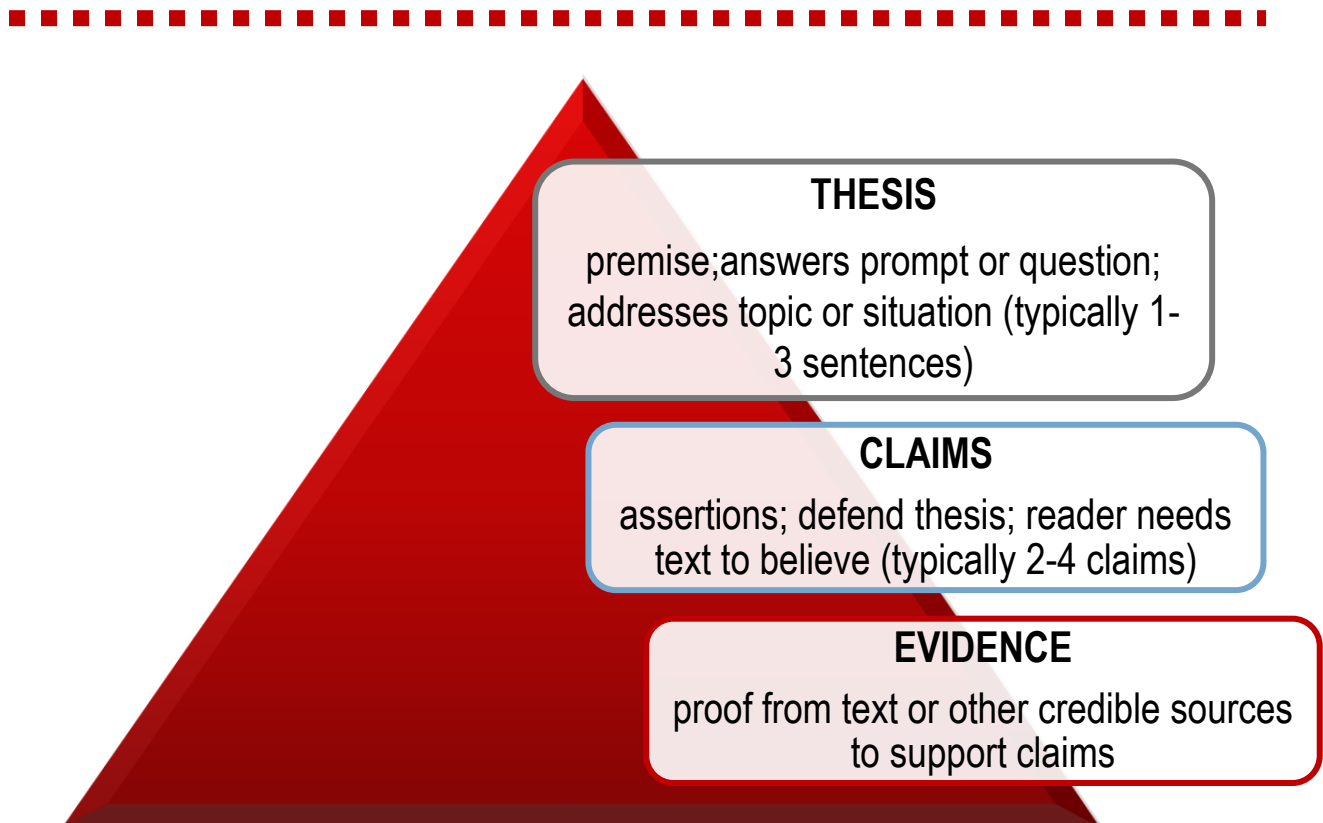
In Ohio's Learning Standards for English Language Arts, Writing Standards 1 & 2 for grades 6-12 ask students to establish a thesis or thesis statement as a foundation for their argument and informative/explanatory writing tasks.

DEFINITIONS:

The THESIS is a premise that answers a prompt or question or addresses a topic or situation calling for action or attention that the writer substantiates throughout the remainder of the paper, using claims and evidence.

The thesis should be confirmed first by claims. **Claims** are assertions, defending the thesis, that need evidence to be proven to the reader. The claims need to be clear, while being supported with textual evidence and credible sources.

The supporting **evidence** substantiates the claims and can be in various forms, including facts, quotations, examples, details, and/or statistics. Students then explain, in their own words, the relevance of the evidence to their claims (or counterclaims), which is called *analysis*. See also [Types of Summaries Standard Guidance](#) for more information on analysis.



Example:

Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*

Prompt: *In Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, a commonality among several characters causes the death and tragedy. What is this commonality?*

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| <p>Thesis: <i>Impetuosity is the tragic flaw within many of those close to Romeo and Juliet, including the couple themselves, which caused eventual destruction.</i></p> | | | |
| <p>Claim #1: Friar Lawrence's careless and rash decisions and actions throughout the play directly led to Romeo and Juliet's death.</p> | <p>Claim #2: Romeo's inability to regulate his emotions, whether that emotion was positive or negative, led to his suicide.</p> | <p>Claim #3: Juliet acted as an impetuous child, whose naiveté and rebellion ruled her actions.</p> | <p>Claim #4: When Capulet impulsively decided to hasten Juliet's marriage, he unknowingly destroyed his own happiness.</p> |
| <p>Evidence #1: Agreed to marry Romeo and Juliet without considering that there may be negative consequences (II.III)</p> <p>Evidence #2: Left Juliet alone in the tomb after Romeo was poisoned (V.III)</p> | <p>Evidence #1: Fell in love with Juliet instantly and decided to marry her (I.V; II.II)</p> <p>Evidence #2: Reacted to hearing of Juliet's death by purchasing poison from an apothecary (V.I)</p> | <p>Evidence #1: Fell in love with Romeo instantly (I.V)</p> <p>Evidence #2: Childish reaction after learning she would have to marry Paris (III.V; IV.I)</p> <p>Evidence #3: Faking her death to deceive her parents, which led to Romeo thinking she was really dead (IV.III; V.I))</p> | <p>Evidence #1: Capulet decides Paris will marry Juliet to shorten her mourning for Tybalt and says he will disown her if she refuses</p> <p>Evidence #2: When Juliet returns from visiting Friar Lawrence and agrees to marry Paris on Thursday, Capulet moves the day to Wednesday, causing all plans to be rushed and mistakes to be made (IV.V).</p> |