

# Thesis Statement Checklist

Does your thesis “do” these things?

- ☐ It should NOT be vague, but should clearly express what the essay is about.
- ☐ It should NOT be factual information, but make a discussable/arguable point.
- ☐ It should NOT start with, “In this essay I will...”, but indicate the structure of the essay.

Example: *“Failure isn’t always the best feeling in the world, but without it people will never grow or find out who they are as a person.”*

This thesis statement clearly <sup>(1)</sup> expresses what the essay is about [failure], gives a topic that can be <sup>(2)</sup> discussed and argued [that is shows true character], and <sup>(3)</sup> indicates the structure of the essay [that failure forces people to grow and discover themselves].

- ☐ **Do I address the prompt?** Re-reading the prompt after constructing a working thesis can help you fix an argument that has missed the focus of the assignment.
- ☐ **Have I taken a position that others might challenge or oppose?** If your thesis simply states facts that no one 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.
- ☐ **Does my thesis pass the “So what?” test?** If a reader’s first response after reading your thesis statement is, “So what?”, then you need to clarify or connect to a larger issue.
- ☐ **Does my thesis pass the “How?” and “Why?” tests?** If a reader’s first response after reading your thesis statement 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 what your position is in the paper.

Modified from

[https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&cad=rja&uact=8&sqi=2&ved=0CCMQFjABahUKEwj6tCg74fGAhXGKawKHVNaALw&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.newfane.wnyric.org%2Fcms%2Flib%2FNy01001283%2Fcentricity%2Fdmain%2F49%2FHero\\_thesis\\_statement.doc&ei=iZ15VaOCIsbTsAXtIHgCw&usg=AFQjCNHYonfw4hH9wQ7Ao0iW7JC9wn3o2w&sig2=X-Chg-aog5cr7aFcBj7PSQ](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&cad=rja&uact=8&sqi=2&ved=0CCMQFjABahUKEwj6tCg74fGAhXGKawKHVNaALw&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.newfane.wnyric.org%2Fcms%2Flib%2FNy01001283%2Fcentricity%2Fdmain%2F49%2FHero_thesis_statement.doc&ei=iZ15VaOCIsbTsAXtIHgCw&usg=AFQjCNHYonfw4hH9wQ7Ao0iW7JC9wn3o2w&sig2=X-Chg-aog5cr7aFcBj7PSQ)

# Thesis Generator

Prompt	Topic	Questions	Answers	Thesis
Write an essay explaining whether failure can strengthen a person.	How failure leads to strength	-Can failure be a good thing? Why? -Why does failure make someone stronger? -What happens when someone fails?	-Yes, it teaches important lessons. -It forces people to grow. -Their response shows what type of person they are.	Failure isn't the best feeling in the world, but without it people will never grow and find out who they are as a person.
Write an essay explaining why it is sometimes necessary to take a chance.				
Write an essay explaining the effect of one new technology on people's lives.				
Write an essay explaining whether people should be more concerned about others than about themselves.				
Write an essay explaining the importance of getting to know people before forming an opinion about them.				
Write an essay explaining whether a person must always be acknowledged in order to have accomplished something.				

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Putting It Together Graphic Organizer**

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graph TD; A[Thesis Statement:] --> B[Reason One:]; A --> C[Reason Two:]; B --> D[Conclusion should be one sentence metaphor or simile summing up/synthesizing why your point is important.]; C --> D;
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Thesis Statement:

Reason One:

Reason Two:

Conclusion should be one sentence metaphor or simile summing up/synthesizing why your point is important.

**Write out your mini essay below. Remember, it should be four paragraphs.**

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**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Development of Ideas Graphic Organizer**

This graphic organizer represents one body paragraph. In order to write a complete essay, you will need to complete this organizer twice-once for each main reason. Each box only needs one complete sentence.

Paragraph One

Reason:



Specific example:



How example proves reason:



Connect to thesis:

## Paragraph Two

Reason:



Specific example:



How example proves reason:



Connect to thesis:

## Transition Words and Phrases

in the first place	again	moreover
not only ... but also	to	as well as
as a matter of fact	and	together with
in like manner	also	of course
in addition	then	likewise
coupled with	equally	comparatively
in the same fashion / way	identically	correspondingly
first, second, third	uniquely	similarly
in the light of	like	furthermore
not to mention	as	additionally
to say nothing of	too	
equally important		
by the same token		

in other words	notably	in fact
to put it differently	including	in general
for one thing	like	in particular
as an illustration	to be sure	in detail
in this case	namely	to demonstrate
for this reason	chiefly	to emphasize
to put it another way	truly	to repeat
that is to say	indeed	to clarify
with attention to	certainly	to explain
by all means	surely	to enumerate
important to realize	markedly	such as
another key point	especially	for example
first thing to remember	specifically	for instance
most compelling evidence	expressively	to point out
must be remembered	surprisingly	with this in mind
point often overlooked	frequently	
on the negative side	significantly	
on the positives ide		

## Effect / Result / Consequence

as a result	for	consequently
under those circumstances	thus	therefore
in that case	because the	thereupon
for this reason	then	forthwith
henceforth	hence	accordingly

## Opposition / Limitation / Contradiction

although this may be true	but	although
in contrast	(and) still	instead
different from	unlike	whereas
of course ..., but	or	despite
on the other hand	(and) yet	conversely
on the contrary	while	otherwise
at the same time	albeit	however
in spite of	besides	rather
even so / though	as much as	nevertheless
be that as it may	even though	nonetheless
then again		regardless
above all		notwithstanding
in reality		
after all		

## Cause / Condition / Purpose

in the event that	if	in case
granted (that)	... then	provided that
as / so long as	unless	given that
on (the) condition (that)	when	only / even if
for the purpose of	whenever	so that
with this intention	since	so as to
in the hope that	while	owing to
to the end that		due to
for fear that	because of	
in order to	as	inasmuch as
seeing / being that	since	
in view of	while	
	lest	

Space / Location / Place

in the middle	here	further
to the left/right	there	beyond
in front of	next	nearby
on this side	where	wherever
in the distance	from	around
here and there	over	before
in the foreground	near	alongside
in the background	above	amid
in the center of	below	among
	down	beneath
adjacent to	up	beside
opposite to	under	behind
	between	across

Time / Chronology / Sequence

at the present time	after	henceforth
from time to time	later	whenever
sooner or later	last	eventually
at the same time	until	meanwhile
up to the present time	till	further
to begin with	since	during
in due time	then	first, second
until now	before	in time
as soon as	hence	prior to
as long as		forthwith
in the meantime	when	straightaway
in a moment	once	
without delay	about	by the time
in the first place	next	whenever
all of a sudden	now	
at this instant	now that	
immediately	formerly	instantly
quickly	suddenly	presently
finally	shortly	occasionally

Conclusion / Summary / Restatement

as can be seen	after all	overall
generally speaking	in fact	ordinarily
in the final analysis	in summary	usually
all things considered	in conclusion	by and large
as shown above	in short	to sum up
in the long run	in brief	on the whole
given these points	in essence	in any event
as has been noted	to summarize	in either case
in a word	on balance	all in all
for the most part	altogether	

Conjunctions

<b>Comparison</b>		than	rather than	what	after
		whether	as much as	whichever	as long as
		whereas		which	as soon as
<b>Concession</b>		though	Who Rel.Adj.	now that	before
		although	whoever	once	by the time
		even though	whom	since	
		while	whomsoever	till	
			whose	until	
<b>Condition</b>		if	where Place	when	
		only if	wherever	whenever	
		unless		while	
		until	how Manner		
		provided that	as though		
		assuming that	as if		
		even if			
		in case (that)			
		lest			
<b>Correlative</b>		as . . . as	either . . . or	what with . . . and	
		just as . . . so	neither . . . nor	whether . . . or	
		both . . . and		not only . . . but also	
		hardly . . . when	if . . . then	no sooner . . . than	
		scarcely . . . when	not . . . but	rather . . . than	
<b>Coordinating</b>		<b>F</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>B</b>
		<b>For</b>	<b>And</b>	<b>Nor</b>	<b>But</b>
					<b>Or</b>
					<b>Yet</b>
					<b>So</b>

### **Model Essay**

Failure isn't always the best feeling in the world, but without it people will never grow or find out who they are as a person.

Failure forces people to change if they want to avoid failing again in the same way. In the sixth grade, I felt terrible when I failed science class because I did not turn in my binder. The next year, I knew I needed to change my organizational skills so that I would not fail my even harder junior high classes. I used that fear of repeating my failure as a motivation to change how I approached my school work which allowed me to be more successful.

Failure gives people a chance to find out how they react when in a difficult situation. When I failed my least favorite class, I could have given up, but I knew that would make me a weak person. The fact that I saw the next class as having room for improvement shows that I am an optimistic person who looks on the bright side. That experience taught me that I have the ability to overcome difficult school situations.



### Model Essay with Transitions

Failure isn't always the best feeling in the world, but without it people will never grow or find out who they are as a person.

Although it does not feel good, failure is positive because it forces people to change if they want to avoid failing again in the same way. I learned this lesson in the sixth grade when I felt terrible because I failed science class when I did not turn in my binder. The next year, I knew I needed to change my organizational skills so that I would not fail my even harder junior high classes. This experience taught me to use that fear of repeating my failure as a motivation to change how I approached my school work which allowed me to be more successful.

Failure does more than just make people feel bad; it also gives people a chance to find out how they react when in a difficult situation. For instance, when I failed my least favorite class, I could have given up, but I knew that would make me a weak person. Consequently, the fact that I saw the next class as having room for improvement shows that I am an optimistic person who looks on the bright side. Overall, that experience taught me that I have the ability to overcome difficult school situations.

## **Former STAAR EOC Prompts**

### **Expository**

Write an essay explaining whether failure can strengthen a person. April 2014 (English 1)

Write an essay explaining why it is sometimes necessary to take a chance. April 2013 (English 1)

Write an essay explaining the effect of one new technology on people's lives. April 2012 (English 1)

Write an essay explaining whether people should be more concerned about others than about themselves. April 2011 (English 1)

Write an essay explaining the importance of getting to know people before forming an opinion about them. April 2013 (English 2)

Write an essay explaining whether a person must always be acknowledged in order to have accomplished something. April 2011 (English 2)

### **Persuasive**

Write an essay stating your position on whether learning always has a positive effect on a person's life. April 2014 (English 2)

Write an essay stating your position on whether it is better to live in a large city or in a small town. April 2013 (English 2)

Write an essay stating your position on which is more important: what a person thinks or what a person does. April 2011 (English 2)

Write an essay stating your position on whether you believe that we live in an information age or an interruption age. April 2011 (English 3)

Write an essay stating your opinion on which is more beneficial—spending time with others or spending time alone. April 2013 (English 3)

## SQOOCH!

**S: Say Something SINCERE and SPECIFIC.** Find something you honestly like about this piece of writing, and give the author a sincere, honest compliment. Every writing effort has something worth praising. Use the person's name as you deliver this compliment with eye contact and a sincere expression. Others can agree and add their own compliment. Then move on to helpful criticism.

**Q: ask QUESTIONS** to help develop the content. Try to see things in a new way, or ask for more elaboration, places where additional detail could give you a clearer picture. Don't get sidetracked into talking about the writer's life experience, but let him or her know what parts of the essay are interesting and worth adding to.

**O: Organize:** Can you identify the author's thesis statement? Underline what you think is the thesis as you read. Does it tell the topic + "so what"? Does it fit with the rest of the essay? Then look at the Topic Sentences (usually the first sentence of each paragraph): do they each support the thesis? Are there any paragraphs longer than half a page or that have too many different ideas in them? You can try to make a brief outline of the "flow" of ideas as you understood them: sometimes it is hard for the writer to organize the content because they are too "close" to the topic.

**O: Optimize:** Help the writer get the best possible grade on the paper. Does the essay fit the assignment? Is it long enough? Try to think like the teacher and make at least 3 specific suggestions that you think will help the writing get a better grade.

**C: Clarify:** put a squiggly mark under any sentences that don't sound clear to you or where you don't know what the writer means. Don't try to correct them, let the writer work it out. Writer's workshop is NOT for proofreading, unless the writer asks for specific help with a specific problem, such as "I know I make a lot of run-togethers, did you notice any?" Do NOT proofread the writer's paper, but do let him or her know if any sentences need work.

**H: The "Heel:"** help the writer improve the introduction and conclusion of the essay. Did the author end using a piece of figurative language? Does it add meaning to the rest of the essay? Is there a new idea presented in the conclusion that builds on the rest of the essay?