

1 Understand the essay question or topic.

Circle any key words to ensure you answer ALL parts of the topic/question.

Sample Question: What is your opinion of the idea that the ability to face hardship is an essential human quality?

Key Words: What is your opinion of the idea that the ability to face hardship is an essential human quality?



2 Identify the root of the question/topic.

Eliminate extra words that aren't essential such as "What is your opinion of. . ."

Sample Question: What is your opinion of the idea that the ability to face hardship is an essential human quality?

Key Words Circled and Non-essential Words Deleted:

~~What is your opinion of the idea that the~~ ability to face hardship is an essential human quality?



3 Rearrange the question into a statement.

Your thesis must be a statement that answers the question.

Sample Question: What is your opinion of the idea that the ability to face hardship is an essential human quality?

Begin with Key Words: The ability to face hardship is an essential human quality. . .



4

Answer the essay question by stating your position and adding a “because” or “but” clause.

Although the topic is complex and other viewpoints exist, your thesis must state your opinion clearly. Include a clause that begins with “because” or “but” to ensure your thesis is specific.

Key Words and “Because” Clause Add Complexity:

The ability to face hardship is an essential human quality **because** hardship helps us realize who we really are.



5

If the purpose of the essay is to ANALYZE a text, include information about the text(s) in your thesis.

Name the type of text (photo, novel, film, etc.), the title, and the author or text creator.

- Titles of longer texts should be italicized or underlined.
- Titles of shorter texts should be in “quotation marks.”

Formula: In [type of text], [text title], [poet/photographer/filmmaker/ etc.] suggests that [thesis statement].

Sample Thesis:

In the poem “Two Inches to the Right,” poet Mat Lloyd suggests that hardship is an essential human quality because hardship helps us realize who we really are.