Writing in History

Thesis Instruction

What is a thesis statement?

- Tells your reader what to expect from your paper
- Makes an **arguable claim** (***makes an argument or takes a position***) and **defends it**
- Is **narrow/focused**, **clear**, and **concise**
- Written in academic language - 3rd person (You can't use "I" statements!!)

Thesis Structure

WHAT? + HOW?+SO WHAT?

The WHAT

- What court case are you talking about?

- What was the ruling of the case?

The HOW

- How did the ruling in your court case impact society?
- What (specifically) was impacted?
- Was it positive or negative?

The SO WHAT

- So what are some specific ways you can prove your argument to be true?
  - Explicit examples!!!

Structure

- The WHAT
  - What is the court case?
  - What was the ruling?
- The HOW
  - How did your court case impact society?
- The SO WHAT
  - So what are some specific examples to prove your “how?”

Example #1

- The Supreme Court ruling in *Texas v. Johnson* protecting the right of a citizen to burn the American flag caused a dangerous shift in how citizens protested by protecting slanderous actions and promoting anarchy against the U.S. government.

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Example #2

- The ruling for Steven I. Engel in the landmark case *Engel v. Vitale* was the most important victory in establishing a separation of church in state, and in doing so, the case confirmed the Establishment Clause of the Constitution and set a precedent for subsequent issues surrounding for school prayer.

Example #2

- The ruling for Steven I. Engel in the landmark case *Engel v. Vitale* was the most important victory in establishing a separation of church in state, and in doing so, the case confirmed the Establishment Clause of the Constitution and set a precedent for subsequent issues surrounding for school prayer.