

Thesis Statement Notes

Read the following excerpt from a student's score "8" response on an AP test.
What makes the thesis exceptional?

In the excerpt from Helena Maria Viramontes' *Under the Feet of Jesus*, the character of Estrella develops rather quickly as a result of the trauma of violence. Viramontes first introduces Estrella by relating the confusion and sadness of the girl, but by the end of the excerpt Estrella appears to have developed into an independent woman with confidence and capability. To illustrate this evolution, Viramontes incorporates elements such as selection of detail emphasizing optimistic elements of the past, naturalistic figurative language, and earnest tone as Estrella finds some meaning and stability in the confusion that she initially faced.

The best response to lit thesis statements and intros:

- 1) Make a Claim = Argument
 - a) Not literal, not obvious
- 2) Tell the Overall Meaning (Whole)
 - a) Meaning = Theme, Tone, Purpose
- 3) Identify Literary Strategies/Devices/Resources (Parts) that reveal this
 - a) This is *how* you know
- 4) Identify a shift or contrast
 - a) Shows complexity of the work

What improvements did the writer make?

"Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* is a great American novel."

"In *Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain develops a contrast between life on the river and life on the shore."

"Through its contrasting river and shore scenes, Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* suggests that to find the true expression of American ideals, one must leave 'civilized' society and go back to nature."

Phrases you will never use: "this essay will be about" "the thesis is" "I think that" "you will see that", etc.

Great verbs: Alludes, Attests, Clarifies, Confirms, Conveys, Denotes, Depicts, Determines,

Displays, Emphasizes, Entails