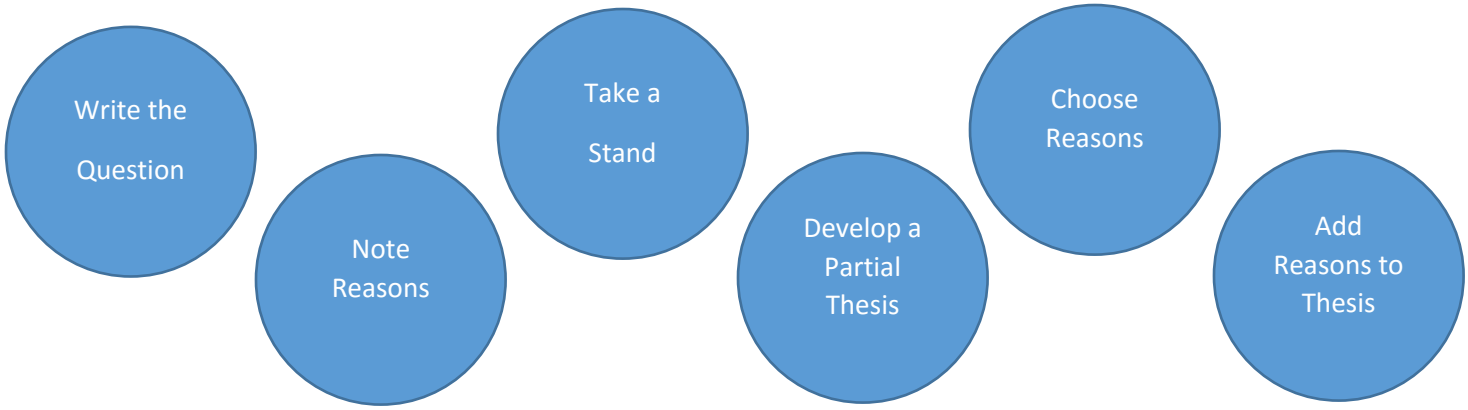
6 Easy Steps

For Developing a Main Point/Thesis Statement from a Topic Paragraph or Essay Prompt



For the CSN English Placement Exam you will be given a topic paragraph (prompt) which consists of:

A. **Information** about the subject you will be writing about, and

B. the **actual subject** which is stated in a question.

Example writing topic paragraph (prompt):

A. Many individuals believe that exercise is beneficial for children because exercise keeps children healthy, teaches them to socialize, and they learn how to participate in teamwork situations. Some believe schools should require students to participate in exercise because statistics show that 30% of children are overweight, out of shape and are not learning sportsmanship. Others, however, disagree, claiming that schools should be a place where only academics are taught because children are falling behind in basic skills, and the school day needs to be used for learning.

B. Should school age children be required to participate in school sports? Plan and write an essay in which you develop your point of view on this subject.

Steps for Developing a Main Point/Thesis Statement

1. **Write the Question:** Read the topic paragraph (prompt), then write the question. For example:

Should school age children be required to participate in school sports?

This question indicates what subject you should write about.

2. **Note Reasons:** Read the **information** portion of the topic paragraph prompt again, and write reasons for and against the subject. Also add your own ideas, personal experiences or knowledge.

For	Against
Exercise is beneficial	School should be used for academics
Fun/ Gain confidence	Children are falling behind in basic skills
Gain Confidence/Mental Health	Kids need more practice with math and English
Keeps children healthy/they socialize	They could get hurt

3**. Take a Stand:** Decide what "stand" you want to take, i.e., are you for or against children participating in exercise at school?

My stand for the essay will be that children should be required to exercise in school.

4. **Develop a Partial Thesis:** Your partial thesis will announce your "stand." A good way to develop a partial thesis statement is to invert the topic paragraph question.

Question: Should school age children be required to participate in school sports?

Your partial thesis statement: School age children should be required to participate in school sports.

5. **Choose Reasons:** After creating a partial thesis, choose three or more reasons that support your "stand." Review Step 2. These reasons will complete your thesis statement.

For example, if you have decided that students should be required to participate in sports at school then you may decide that:

Keeping children healthy, socializing and battling childhood obesity problem

are important reasons.

6. **Add Your Reasons to Partial Thesis:** These reasons are the BECAUSE of your essay.

School age children should be required to participate in school sports BECAUSE they will be healthier, learn to socialize, and maintain a healthy body weight.

With reasons you now have a complete thesis statement.

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For Developing a Thesis Statement from a Topic Paragraph or Essay Prompt

PRACTICE: Use the practice topic paragraph (prompt) below to work through the "6 Easy Steps" and complete a thesis statement, then have the CSN Writing Center check your work.

Topic Paragraph (prompt):

Many believe our society puts entirely too much focus on the Internet. Some individuals spend far too many hours browsing nonsensical websites, playing games and using social networking when they could be reading literature, talking to people and facing the realities of their lives. Moreover, these activities don't help anyone succeed in "real" life. Conversely, some believe that the Internet has positively changed the world with access to an abundance of information, instantaneous facts and social connections. Is the Internet a valuable source, or is it an invention that is changing society in negative ways?