



The Lantern English Co.
English Program
Level V (10th Grade)

Week One: Vocabulary

LESSON & ASSIGNMENTS: WRITE DEFINITIONS

Assignment 1: Read the 35 words below. This is your vocabulary list for study over the next nine weeks. Begin this week by looking up the definition for each of the words, then write it *in your own words*.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• aberration• accoutered• apparition• benefice• capacious• detestation• doleful• efficacy• erudite• feign• impenetrable• implacable• irascibility• jurisdiction• knave• laborious• loath• malignity | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• mosaic• odious• pliable• presentiment• prosaic• prudence• reticence• sobriety• surfeits• timorous• torpid• vanquished• vehement• venerable• vilifying• wanton• whimsies |
|--|---|



The Lantern English Co.
English Program
Level V (10th Grade)

Week One: Grammar

LESSON & ASSIGNMENTS: NOUNS & PRONOUNS

Writing is not just about having good ideas. If it were, people with good ideas would automatically be good writers. Unfortunately, this is not the case.

A good writer knows that he must have more than creative ideas in his head. In fact, he must have much more than ideas. A good writer must have *knowledge* of his language.

If you want to be a good writer and do not understand your language (whether English, Chinese, or Russian), you will not get very far. Understanding the basic mechanics of your language is essential to crafting good writing in letters, essays, reports, and stories. Although these studies may seem boring to you, **your writing has no ability to improve or grow unless you take the time to build a strong foundation in mechanics.**

We begin our study of writing mechanics with *the parts of speech*. Our English language has **eight** parts of speech. Here are the names and some examples of each:

Noun	Names a person, place, thing, or idea	Examples: mom, Mr. Grape, Seattle, NYC, apple, guitar, happiness, joy
Pronoun	Replaces a noun	Examples: he, she, it, I, you, some
Verb	States an action, helps another verb, or links another word to the subject	Examples: be, have, do, like, work, sing, can, must
Adjective	Describes a noun	Examples: a/an, the, sixty-nine (69), blue, some, good, big, red, interesting
Adverb	Describes an adjective, verb, or another adverb	Examples: quickly, silently, well, badly, very, really
Conjunction	Joins clauses or sentences or words	Examples: and, but, when
Preposition	Links a noun to another word	Examples: under, above, over, in, on, after, to, at
Interjection	Short exclamation, sometimes inserted into a sentence	Examples: My! Oh! Ouch! Hi!

For our first lesson, we will begin with both the noun and pronoun.

The Noun

A noun names a person, place, thing, or idea.

We can separate nouns into two main groups: **concrete nouns** and **abstract nouns**.

Concrete nouns are nouns that we can touch with our hands, see with our eyes, smell with our nose, hear with our ears, or taste with our tongue. In other words, we use one or more of our five senses to experience the concrete noun. Concrete nouns name people, places, and things.

The other type of noun is an abstract noun. This is a noun that we cannot see, hear, feel, touch, or taste.

Happiness is an example of this. We cannot see, hear, smell, touch, or taste happiness. It is an idea or a concept. You cannot say what color happiness is or what it tastes like. If you tried to touch happiness, you would have a very hard time doing that because there is nothing to touch. Does happiness have a smell? No. *Happiness* is an abstract noun.

Freedom and *liberty* are two other examples of abstract nouns. Abstract nouns do not have color, sound, taste, etc. Abstract nouns name ideas.

We can also categorize nouns in another way: **common nouns and proper nouns**. Let us look at **common nouns first**.

Common Nouns

Person	Place	Thing	Idea
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• mother• brother• clerk• policeman• athlete	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• home• store• street• bedroom• warehouse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• cup• bananas• table• book• computer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• love• hope• happiness• fear• anger

Notice that the nouns in the first table do not start with a capital letter. That is because they are not naming a specific person, place, thing, or idea. **We call these types of nouns common nouns or improper nouns. We use common nouns when we are not referring to something by a specific name.**

Assignment 1A: Write ten common nouns for each:

Person	Place	Thing	Ideas
1.	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.	4.
5.	5.	5.	5.
6.	6.	6.	6.
7.	7.	7.	7.
8.	8.	8.	8.
9.	9.	9.	9.
10.	10.	10.	10.

Assignment 1B: Study this grammatical rendition of “My Favorite Things” from the *Sound of Music*. **Underline** all of the common nouns. Ask yourself for each word: “Does this name a person, place, thing, or idea?”

Raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens
Bright copper kettles and warm woolen mittens
Brown paper packages tied up with strings
These are a few of my favorite nouns

Cream colored ponies and crisp apple streudels
Doorbells and sleigh bells and schnitzel with noodles
Wild geese that fly with the moon on their wings
These are a few of my favorite nouns

Girls in white dresses with blue satin sashes
Snowflakes that stay on my nose and eyelashes
Silver white winters that melt into springs
These are a few of my favorite nouns

When the dog bites
When the bee stings
When I'm feeling sad
I simply remember my favorite nouns
And then I don't feel so bad.

Proper Nouns

Person	Place	Thing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mom• Aunt Susan• Grandpa Chuck• President Anderson	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Highland Park• Walgreens• King's Dominion• France	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Empire Apples• Bible• Android• Nile River

Note that all of the nouns in this table begin with a capital letter. These nouns are naming a specific person, place, or thing (note that ideas – abstract nouns – can never be made proper.) **We call these types of nouns specific or proper nouns. We use proper nouns when we are referring to something by a specific name.**

The following categories are always proper nouns.

1. Names of people and pets:

Mrs. Edwards David Snoopy Garfield

2. Names of places and buildings:

Madrid, Spain Main Street Washington Monument
Lake Ontario Alaska Pacific Ocean

3. Names of books, movies, newspapers, and magazines:

Charlotte's Web Toy Story The Orlando Times
Highlights Monsters, Inc.

4. Names of holidays, days of the week, and months:

Christmas Sunday April
Memorial Day Thanksgiving Friday

5. Names of languages:

Spanish English French Italian

6. Names of companies and brand names:

Google Pepsi Nike Apple

7. Titles of people when used in front of their names:

President Lincoln King George Captain Hook
Judge Peterson Prince William Doctor McNeish

8. Names of religions:

Baptist Protestant Jewish Catholic

Two groups of nouns that can be confusing when it comes to capitalizing them are the seasons (spring, summer, fall, and winter) and directions (north, south, east, west).

The general rule for seasons is that you do not capitalize them unless they start a sentence or are part of the name of an event such as the "Winter Olympics."

The rule for directions is also easy. If you are referring to a specific part or location of the country (such as *the South, the Northwest, the East*), then you should capitalize them. But, if you are just referring to a general direction, then do not capitalize them (such as *north of town, southeast of my house*).

Assignment 1C: Write five proper nouns for each. Remember to capitalize each proper noun:

Person	Place	Thing
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.
5.	5.	5.

Making Nouns Plural

Making nouns plural is something you should already be familiar with in junior high school. Most of the time, it is something you learn just by speaking. You know to turn *eyelash* into *eyelashes* or *chair* into *chairs*. You know that there are various plural forms such as *tomato* turned into *tomatoes* or *sheep* into *sheep*. For the sake of time, we will not review rules for making nouns plural here. If you feel you do not understand the rules, you can ask for review material or find your own online.

Making Nouns Possessive

Although this also should be something you are familiar with, making nouns possessive trips a lot of students up. Let us review the basic rules:

Rule #1 - If the noun ends in the sound of the letter S, we use an apostrophe to show possession.

the bus - the bus' window the class - the class' lesson
the cars - the cars' drivers

Rule #2 - If the noun ends in any sound other than S, we use an apostrophe and then the letter S to show possession.

the dog - the dog's bone the quiz - the quiz's answers
the men - the men's team

Rule #3 - If a proper noun ends in the letter S, we use only an apostrophe to show possession.

Charles - Charles' book Jesus - Jesus' mother Chris - Chris' bicycle

Rule #4 - Acronyms form the possessive with an apostrophe and the letter S.

NASA - NASA's spaceship ABC - ABC's documentary
USA - the USA's flag

Rule #5 - If you have two nouns and two objects that are individually owned, then each noun is made possessive.

John and Mary - John's and Mary's hats
James and Ann - James' and Ann's dinners

Rule #6 - If you have two nouns and both nouns own the same object, then just the last noun is made possessive.

John and Mary - John and Mary's children
James and Ann - James and Ann's car

Assignment 1D: Write six sentences to demonstrate each of the six rules for forming possessives.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Pronouns

We can study the pronoun immediately following the noun because it performs the same job as the noun. **A pronoun is a word that takes the place of a noun.** Pronouns are very useful because otherwise we would be repeating the same noun over and over again. There are several kinds of pronouns in English. Each type of pronoun is used in a specific way. This lesson will teach you how to use **nominative** and **possessive pronouns** (You will learn about the other kinds of pronouns in Lesson 7).

Nominative pronouns are sometimes called *subject pronouns*, because they usually take the place of a noun that is functioning as the subject in a sentence (more about that in Lesson 4).

Here are the **nominative** or **subject pronouns**. The singular is given with its plural in the next column.

<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>
I	we
you	you
he	they
she	they
it	they

Remember, these pronouns are used as the subjects of a sentence. Below are some examples using each of these pronouns.

<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>
<i>I</i> drive a car.	<i>We</i> drive a car.
<i>You</i> eat ice cream.	<i>You</i> (all) eat ice cream.
<i>He</i> speaks Russian.	<i>They</i> speak Russian.
<i>She</i> swims every day.	<i>They</i> swim every day.
<i>It</i> keeps food cold.	<i>They</i> keep the food cold.

Possessive pronouns are used to shown possession. We can substitute a possessive pronoun for a possessive noun in the same way we substitute a nominative pronoun for a subject.

Here are the **possessive pronouns**. The singular is given with its plural in the next column.

<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>
mine	ours

yours
his
hers
its

yours
theirs
theirs
theirs

Remember, these pronouns are only used to show possession. Look at some examples using each of these possessive pronouns.

Singular

The car was *mine*.
The ice cream is *yours*.
The book will be *his*.
The swimming pool is *hers*.
The tires were *its*.

Plural

The car was *ours*.
The ice cream is (all of) *yours*.
The book will be *theirs*.
The swimming pool is *theirs*.
The tires were *theirs*.

Assignment 1E: Underline all of the nominative or possessive pronouns in the following sentences.

1. What are you doing with them?
2. Their fish will be ours.
3. Will you tell us where he is?
4. They are friends of ours.
5. Is that yours?
6. It is going to be cold next week.
7. The painting is his.
8. That shirt is hers.
9. We are not very happy with you.
10. She loves working with them.
11. This house is for us.
12. Will they come early, do you think?
13. That is mine!
14. You are frustrating me!



The Lantern English Co.
English Program
Level V (10th Grade)

Week One: Writing

LESSON & ASSIGNMENTS: THE ARGUMENTATIVE THESIS

To recap from previous studies:

“Remember, expository writing is meant to explain, teach, analyze, etc. You are not arguing for your point. You are merely giving the details or facts, analyzing the potential causes or consequences, studying the descriptions, giving directions, etc. On the other hand, argumentative writing is meant to prove your point. It is meant to prove why the stance you have is one everyone else should adopt – or at least think extensively about in order to form of a very clear opinion themselves.

Every topic may have in and of itself an expository and argumentative side. Let us use the topic of exercise, for example. This is a very popular topic in modern first-world culture; most everyone believes that exercise is needed for a healthy lifestyle. If you were to be writing an expository essay about exercise, you might explain (classify) various types of exercise. Or, you could highlight the scientific facts about the health benefits of exercise. You could describe a particular type of exercise, such as running or Yoga, giving the facts about history, competition, participation, etc. You might teach someone how to perform a particular exercise or type of exercise. You could analyze a particular type of exercise, evaluating its roots, causes, and effects, or even perhaps why it is or is not so popularly used in our culture. I have given below a few example thesis statements for an expository essay on exercise:

- Exercise, something that is crucial for a healthy lifestyle, can be broken up into three components: cardio training, strength training, and flexibility training. Each part is essential to a well-balanced exercise program.
- People participate in a variety of exercise programs or sports to stay in shape, but perhaps one of the more interesting methods of staying fit is found in Yoga – a form of exercise deeply rooted in history and tradition.
- Figure skating is my favorite form of exercise. However, the thought of gliding across a slippery surface of ice on one thin blades seems terrifying to many. Still, with a little knowledge and practice, figure skating is not so difficult after all.
- Running is one of the cheapest, easiest forms of exercise to participate in, because you need only a good pair of running shoes to get started, and you can run almost anywhere. Because of this simplicity, the popularity of running in our culture is booming in a fascinating way.

If you notice in all of the statements, I am not trying to prove an arguable point.

Yes, someone could argue that you do not need all three components of cardio, strength, and flexibility training to have a successful exercise program, but most people would agree with the statement. Thus, the essay is designed to be more focused on explaining each of these three components along with their scientific importance and benefit to a healthy exercise program.

For the second essay, the writer would be explaining the history and tradition of Yoga, and why this method of exercise is so interesting. However, the writer is not trying to prove a point or stand for an argument. The writer is merely explaining.

The third thesis statement could again be argued. Yes, someone could say, "Figure skating actually is really difficult", but again, that will not be the point of the writer's essay. Because the writer has knowledge of the sport, she will be teaching her readers the basics of figure skating so they can pursue it confidently, knowing it is not as difficult as it seems.

Finally, using the fourth thesis statement, the writer will analyze the popularity of running in modern culture, due to the sport's overall simplicity and availability to the mainstream public.

Now, let us look at the same four defined topics in argumentative thesis form:

- Though many believe that a successful exercise program must be built on the premise of "no pain, no gain", it is possible to be in shape and healthy by utilizing gentle, whole-body flexibility and strength training such as is taught in Sara Black's *The Supple Body*.
- Many Christians suggest that Yoga is not an acceptable form of exercise for believers because of its pagan roots. However, just as we celebrate originally-pagan holidays such as Christmas and Easter, it is possible to utilize the exercises of Yoga whilst avoiding the worship of other gods or oneself.
- For decades, Russia and the United States have had a rivalry in the realm of women's figure skating. Success in the sport has been swapped back and forth between the two countries; however, because of the United States lackluster training programs and general lenience in terms of hard-core competition and testing training, Russia will likely remain on top for a long time coming unless the United States makes some serious changes to their women's development program.
- Though running is an excellent sport to participate in because of its simplicity and availability to the mainstream public, it is actually a superior sport because of the camaraderie created within running social circles.

Notice that these statements, while they address the same chosen topics, take completely different approaches. All four of these statements make unique claims.

- "No pain, no gain" is not necessary to stay in shape and be healthy.
- Christians can practice Yoga in a way that is acceptable and God-honoring.
- The United States women's figure skating development program will not be able to stand against Russia's in its current state.
- Running is actually a superior sport, not just because of its simplicity and availability, but because of the social improvements and connections available.

With these statements, the writer is taking well-known arguments within certain circles and standing for an opposite approach.”

The Argumentative Thesis

There are several components to the development of a strong argumentative thesis statement and a strong argument. We will cover certain components in greater detail over the coming weeks, but for now, let us go over the main steps.

1. Construct a unique thesis statement. However, that is not to be miss-read as that you should develop a thesis statement for an argument you do not agree with. Recently, I worked with a young lady who was under the impression that in order to make her thesis statements unique, she had to construct viewpoints which she herself did not agree with. She wrote a very strong paper about why abortion was a good thing, because she considered this a unique viewpoint. Certainly, this was not your every-day, typical paper, and it was quite well-written... but she didn't agree with what she was saying. She was arguing for something she didn't actually believe.

When constructing a strong thesis statement, it should be unique but it should also come from the core of your beliefs. What makes the thesis statement unique is you deeply studying your own beliefs rather than just taking whatever comes at face value.

For example, I am currently reading a book about financial planning. The author, a financial advisor, walks his clients and his readers through a series of questions to help them determine how to best plan their finances. The first question he asks is, “Why is money so important?” There is not a concrete answer to this, because money may be important to you for a different reason than it is to me. Some of the initial answers I gave (and similar to client answers he offered in the book) were things like “freedom”, “security”, and “being able to help”. However, these are merely surface answers. Yes, they are things I believe, but hundreds of other people would probably answer quite the same. How do I make my answers unique? I must really study my surface answers further. If *freedom* is a reason why money is so important, what do I actually mean by that? Freedom to do what? In an example used in the book, a woman began by answering that financial planning was important to her for freedom and realized after a bit of deeper probing with the financial advisor that what she really meant was that financial planning was important to her because she wanted to be able to take time away from her demanding career so that she and her husband could have children. Now, her statement became unique and interesting.

The same concept can apply to thesis development. Again, a unique statement does not have to be something wildly unheard of. The point is to get past your initial surface ideas, feelings, and thoughts and get into the deeper issues.

2. Take a strong and clear position of belief. While you do not need to be an arrogant jerk about your position, you also cannot walk the road of humility. You must own your argument. If you believe that money is the answer to happiness, you must state that. You must hold consistently to your argument. This is not the time to say, “Citizens should take more responsibility in solving the problems of their communities and the nation, but I could be wrong about this.” Again, own your argument. Avoid indecisiveness. The entire goal of the argumentative essay is to be able to take a position on a matter and defend it with reasoning.

3. Avoid weak qualifiers. Many student writers use weak phrases in an attempt to be humble and open-minded. While the motive may not be pre-meditated, the results are always the same. When you use weak qualifiers such as “I believe” or “in my opinion”, you are not only muddling your writing with wordiness, but you are also coming across as wimpy.

Never use these phrases.

If I told you, “Black tea is the most flavourful choice,” would not you assume that this is what I believe? There is no need to say, “*I believe* that black tea is the most flavourful choice.” It is obvious that what you state is part of your position. Therefore, using qualifying phrases is always redundant and unnecessary.

While phrases like “I believe”, “in my opinion”, or “I think” are obvious in their needlessness, other words and phrases may not be so noticeable. However, your statements can be made weak when you use words and phrases such as “somewhat”, “a bit”, and “sort of”.

4. Avoid emotional language. As you work through the process of developing a unique thesis statement, it is easy to get into emotion. While argumentative papers do not need to be void of emotion (and your emotions are connected to your beliefs), your entire argument cannot be constructed on emotion. For example, if you are arguing against a city-wide curfew for anyone under eighteen, your argument cannot be constructed entirely on the fact that, “I just don't like it.” Your statement is emotional, not factually, charged; the problem with this is that emotions change and are not always shared or recognized by others. If you were trying to convince the mayor of the city to not adopt the curfew, your emotions alone are not going to do the convincing. Instead, you may end up sounding like a whiny teenager. However, if you approached the mayor with fact-based evidence about the disadvantages of a city-wide curfew, she may recognize your maturity, wisdom, and insight and will be more likely to consider your argument.

5. Do not build your statement around religion, morality, or culture alone. Additionally, as you consider your deeper beliefs, you may quickly find how many things you believe or stand for merely because that is what you were taught during your upbringing. I was taught many things growing up, without ever really knowing a why. Of course, explaining to a five-year-old the ins and outs of why certain things are not good is not necessarily easy, so parents just teach their children that *this* is good and *that* is bad. However, upon becoming a young adult, you begin to question these beliefs. This is where your thesis statement will get stronger. When you can get away from the upbringing answers and consider why you actually believe (or do not believe) these statements, and why they are (or are not) true, you are now actually getting into a strong argument. If you do not, you end up with statements like, “Creation is true because that is what I was taught in Sunday school” or “Dating is bad but courtship is good” or “Democracy is the only correct government because that is what my nation uses” or “Getting drunk is bad.” Again, the same as with emotion, you do not need to entirely forego religion, morality, or culture, as all three of those do play a significant role in who you are as an individual; but remember that your argument is aimed towards people who likely do not share your religious/moral/cultural experiences or beliefs, and thus will be looking for more solid evidence if they are to consider your point.

6. Finally, avoid creating a thesis statement without solid or sufficient evidence. For example, a common statement I heard during my conservative Christian upbringing was that rock music was bad. This is a completely un-provable statement. There is absolutely no way to prove that music with a beat or a certain tempo is inherently “bad.” Besides, what does “bad” even mean? Another argument I commonly heard was that non-Christian music was bad. Again, what does “bad” even mean? But furthermore, how do you define Christian music versus non, and what makes supposedly non-Christian music bad? What I found funny was that these people could so quickly say that non-Christian music was bad yet still listen to classical music or movie soundtracks. Really, when you get into the realm of saying one thing is “bad” and another thing is “good”, you are usually running up against an argument that has little to no evidence. Do not create stereotypes and do not make statements that are impossible to prove. For example:

- “All politicians are power-hungry, selfish individuals. This hurts our ability to succeed as a country.”

While it may certainly seem that politicians are this way, we cannot confidently and accurately say that every single politician on the planet is motivated by power and self.

- “Everyone knows that money cannot buy happiness.”

Of course, most people may agree with this statement, but that does not mean that everyone knows it. You can improve both statements simply:

- “Many politicians are power-hungry, selfish individuals. This hurts our ability to succeed as a country.”
- “Money cannot buy happiness.”

Developing a Better Thesis

“Think of yourself as a member of a jury, listening to a lawyer who is presenting an opening argument. You'll want to know very soon whether the lawyer believes the accused to be guilty or not guilty, and how the lawyer plans to convince you. Readers of academic essays are like jury members: before they have read too far, they want to know what the essay argues as well as how the writer plans to make the argument. After reading your thesis statement, the reader should think, "This essay is going to try to convince me of something. I'm not convinced yet, but I'm interested to see how I might be." --*The Writing Center at Harvard University*

An effective argumentative thesis cannot be answered with a simple *yes* or *no*. Remember, **a thesis is not a topic. It is also not a fact, nor an opinion.**

Final Steps to Constructing a Great Argumentative Thesis

First, analyze your sources. Remember, you should always be researching valuable material to aid in writing your essay. Never write an argumentative essay merely from personal knowledge or experience (unless you are writing a timed essay in which you cannot perform research – more about this on week eight). While reading and researching, look for controversy, complication, interest, and tension. Is there any contradiction? What are the deeper implications made by texts you are reading? Ask a lot of “why” questions. This helps you develop something beyond a simple observation.

Once you have an idea for a thesis, write it down. Do not let any good ideas go to waste or become forgotten when you lose concentration. You might have a number of statements to work with, or you might only have one. Determine which thesis you can develop most skilfully. Begin to work with that one. Remember, you can even change up the thesis later on if you feel it is not totally suitable for your essay.

Even if you have not begun writing your essay, you must anticipate any counter-arguments against your thesis (again, more about this on week five). Of course, when you develop a thesis, you think of all of the reasons why it is correct. However, you should also think of what might be said against it. This will help you to refine your thesis, and prepare you for the arguments you will need to refute in your essay. If you find that your “thesis” does not have any counter-arguments, then it is probably just a fact or an opinion. You should work on revising the thesis. Every effective argument will, by nature, have counter-arguments.

Things To Remember

- **A thesis is never a question.** Yes, in *Essay I*, we mentioned that opening or “baiting” your reader with a question was useful. This can be the case, but it is not a wise choice for an academic essays. Save this for a fun narrative or descriptive essay. However, for academic expository or argumentative essays, readers are looking for an argument, not a question.
- **A thesis should not be a list.** Again, “listing” the various sections and reasons in your essay is appropriate for the beginner's five-paragraph piece. But, as you advance, this type of telegraphing will not be accepted for a thesis. Example: "For political, economic, social and cultural reasons, communism collapsed in Eastern Europe" does a good job of "telegraphing" to the reader what to

expect in the essay—a section about political reasons, a section about economic reasons, a section about social reasons, and a section about cultural reasons. However, political, economic, social and cultural reasons are pretty much the only possible reasons why communism could collapse. This sentence lacks tension and does not advance an argument. Everyone knows that politics, economics, and culture are important.

- **A thesis should never be vague, combative or confrontational.** Many people think that you must be rude, judgemental, or confrontational while developing a strong thesis. That is what “arguing” is all about, is it not? But, when we say that you need to develop an argument, we do not mean that you need to start off on the wrong foot with your readers. In fact, if you come across as moralistic and judgemental, your reader will probably stop reading after the introduction. Conversely, if your thesis is too vague, you may lose your reader to boredom.
- **An effective thesis has a definable, arguable claim.** The goal of your thesis is to cause the reader to react by thinking, “Perhaps what the author says is true, but I am not convinced. I want to read further to see how the author argues this claim.” You do not want other reactions such as, “This will be boring”; “What the author says doesn’t make any sense”; or “Duh, everyone already knows that.”
- **A thesis should be as clear and specific as possible.** Avoid overused, general terms and abstractions. Avoid clichés. Avoid overused facts.
- **A thesis should be narrow.** “Drug use is detrimental to society” may be true. It may even be arguable. However, it is far too broad. This statement leaves too many questions open, which the author will never be able to adequately cover. Here is an example of a more specific thesis. This removes the questions such as, “what drugs are we talking about” or “what does the author mean by society?” This thesis statement is both arguable and narrow: “Illegal drug use is detrimental because it encourages gang violence.”

An effective argumentative thesis is paramount to an effective argumentative essay. Take your time to learn how to develop excellent argumentative thesis statements. Read powerful argumentative essays and study the thesis statements. Study how students write powerfully convincing arguments. You are on your way to doing the same.

Assignment 1: Using the ten probing topic questions given below, develop strong, unique argumentative thesis statements. Would these statements be a strong foundation for an argumentative essay? Are the statements unique? Are the statements provable? Do you avoid building statements solely on emotional charges or religious/moral/cultural beliefs?

- Do you trust your government?
- Are law enforcement cameras an infringement of privacy?
- Does age matter in relationships?
- Is competition good?
- Do colleges place too much weight on standardized test scores as a way to determine college entrance?
- Do leaders have moral obligations?
- Is modern culture ruining children?
- Are we losing the art of listening?
- When should you compromise?
- How much does your neighborhood define who you are?



The Lantern English Co.
English Program
Level V (10th Grade)

Week One: Literature

LESSON & ASSIGNMENTS: READING

Assignment 1: Read chapters 1-11 of *Silas Marner* by George Eliot.