



Lesson 2: Writing About Exhibitions

A Thesis State of Mind

STUDENT CURATORS

Objectives

- Students will learn how to write, critique, and refine a thesis statement.
- Students will write a thesis statement that is relevant, clear, and concise and that can effect social change.
- Students will learn to curate an object based exhibition from a thesis statement.

Introduction

Begin by asking students what a “Thesis Statement” is. By this point in their High School careers, they would have heard the term “Thesis Statement” hundreds of times, but this will help you gauge their understanding of what a thesis statement really is. Ask students the following questions:

- What is a Thesis Statement? What is it’s purpose? Why is it important?
- Where have you encountered a Thesis Statement before?
- Have you written one before?

Explain to students that a Thesis statement should be the following:

- A thesis statement focuses your ideas into one or two sentences.
- It should present your topic and also make a comment about your position in relation to the topic.
- A good thesis helps guide your writing and keeps your argument focused.

Discuss with students how a good thesis statement will help guide an argument, while a bad or unclear thesis statement will get confusing or muddled.

A good thesis statement should be the following:

1. A good thesis statement should be **Specific**.
 - Shape your topic so that you can get straight to the “meat” of it. Avoid generalities.
2. A good thesis statement should be **Clear**.
 - Avoid vague and abstract words.
 - Never assume that the meaning of a sentence is obvious.
 - To avoid misunderstandings, be as specific as possible.



Materials

- Student Curators Writing about Exhibitions PowerPoint (Included in the Resource Guide)
- Access to Pinterest for Extension Activity

Utah Core Standards

Standard L3.V.CR.1:

Visualize and hypothesize to generate plans for ideas and directions for creating art and design that can effect social change.

Standard L3.V.P.3:

Curate a collection of objects, artifacts, or artwork to affect the viewer’s understanding of social, cultural, and/or political experiences.

3. A good thesis statement **Takes a Position**.
 - Make a defensible claim. What do you have to say about this topic, and how will you justify your position?
 - Instead of merely stating a general fact or resorting to a simplistic pro/con statement, you must decide what it is you have to say.
4. A good thesis statement is **Relevant**.
 - Don’t just report facts. Why does your point matter? Why do people care about it?



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Learning Activity

In order to teach the importance of a good thesis statement vs. a bad thesis statement, show the class examples of statements and have them decide if its good or bad. With each statement have them consider if it is specific, clear, takes a position and is relevant. You can use the following examples, or come up with some of your own! (the Power Point on the resource guide will help you with this)

1. Sugar Consumption
2. There are serious objections to today's Horror Movies.
3. I'm going to describe Shakespeare's Love Life.
4. Experts estimate that half of elementary school children consume nine times the recommended daily allowance of sugar.
5. Good vs. evil is the main theme of Lewis's Narnia series, as is made clear through the struggles the main characters face in each book.
6. Why are politicians paid so much?
7. High school graduates should be required to take a year off to pursue community service projects before entering college in order to increase their maturity and global awareness.

Explain to students the difference between a research thesis statement (for a research paper) and an exhibition thesis statement.

A research thesis statement will be used to conduct and define specific research (papers, studies, scientific experiments etc.)

An Exhibition Thesis statement will be centered around objects or artwork. It will include a visual representation of an argument. Research will inform what objects are selected and interpretive will support thesis & research

For the purpose of this unit, we will be focusing on exhibition-driven thesis statements.

Learning Activity 2:

1. After explaining and discussing the purpose of thesis statements, have students do the following activity. Ask student to choose one of the following topics:

- A. Decide on an issue in your school.
- B. Choose an issue from your own life.

2. Ask students to write a thesis statement about the issue. Once they have a clear, specific, relevant and position- based thesis statement, have them do the following activity:

- A. If they chose to write about a school issue: students will curate an exhibition (5-10 objects) about the issue using only objects from your classroom.
- B. If they chose to write about a life issue: students will curate an exhibition (5-10 objects) about the issue using only objects from their locker or backpack.

3. After students have created their mini exhibitions, have them share their thesis statement with the class and explain why they selected the objects to support this statement.

4. If time permits, have students create an artwork that reflects their thesis statement. They should include a title and artist statement explaining their work and how it ties to their thesis statement.





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Extension 1:

In order to further understanding and practice of writing a thesis statement, show students the Nova Science video clip about Auto Tuning:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9OUgXFZ_WeY

Note: You can choose another video, but you want a video that address a topic that can be argued from either side.

After finishing the video clip, ask the students the following questions:

- Should stars use Autotune?
- Is it Ethical?
- If an artist uses AutoTune in a live concert or on a recording, is it deceiving the audience?
- Should the audience be aware of Autotune?

After a brief class discussion, have the students write a thesis statement about their stance on the issue. Remember that it should be specific, clear, relevant, and it should take a position. Have students NOT write their name on their paper. When students have finished, collect the thesis statements and redistribute them anonymously to the class.

Ask the class to stand up and read their new thesis statement. Does it take a position? Is it specific, clear & relevant? Ask students to share a few examples of a good thesis statement.

Extension 2:

This additional learning activity can be done in order to give students more experience with curating objects around an exhibition. Have students do the following:

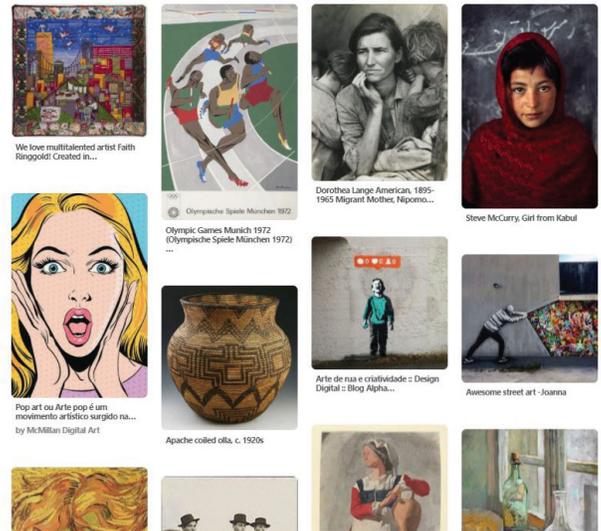
1. Select a world issue.
2. Write a thesis statement about this issue. (Be sure it is specific, clear, relevant and that it takes a position.)
3. Curate an exhibition about this issue using images from our Student Curators Pinterest Board (10-15 images)

> Springville Museum of Art Pinterest
> Student Curators

<https://www.pinterest.com/SMoFA/student-curators/>

Student Curators

214 Pins
462 Followers



4. Don't forget a title!
5. Have students share their digital exhibitions with the class. They should share their thesis, the title, and briefly explain why they selected each image.

Assessment:

Students may receive a grade for completion for both learning activities.

After students have finished either or both learning activities, discuss with students their experience with writing an exhibition-driven thesis statement. What was easy? What was difficult?

How might a bad thesis statement effect an exhibition?

Sources:

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9OUgXFZ_WeY
- <https://www.pinterest.com/SMoFA/student-curators/>

(these links are also available on our website: www.smofa.org/student-curators)