

# Thesis Notes from Bingham

(with help from my peers)

## Levels of Specificity / Developing a Thesis Statement – How Much Do I Say?

How much specificity to include in the Thesis Statement should be a balancing act, on the one hand, you don't want to be too general (Level Three Generalization), but on the other hand you don't want to be too specific (Level One Specification). Let them know where you are going, but don't give away all your information. We want the reader to keep reading! We will call the right amount of specificity - **Level Two Specificity**.

Consider the following prompt:

**Identify and evaluate the causes which led to the American Revolution.**

**Level Three Thesis (not enough):** The economic factors were very harsh on the Americans. However, the political and social conditions were much more strenuous on the Americans. Therefore, while economic factors were important, political and social factors were more important in bringing about the American Revolution. (thesis)

**Level Two Thesis (just right):** The taxes which were implemented following the French and Indian War were viewed by Americans as harsh and unfair leading to anger and frustration. However, it was the denial of basic political rights along with a beefed-up presence in enforcing policies which had long been ignored which gave rise to a new sentiment within the American conscience. Therefore, while economic factors like taxes were important, political and social factors were more important in bringing about the American Revolution. (thesis)

**Level One Thesis (too much):** The Stamp Act, Tea Act, and Intolerable Acts were very harsh on the Americans which led to great anger and frustration. However, no taxation without representation concept, the Admiralty Courts, enforcement of the Navigation Act to counter piracy and smuggling, the Quartering Act, and the Boston Massacre, were important factors which caused more stress on the Americans. Therefore, while economic factors were important, political and social factors were more important in bringing about the American Revolution. (thesis)

Use this formula only when you are ready. You can get a FIVE on the exam using the basic formula we have learned already.

**The Thesis Formula:** *X. However, A and B. Therefore, Y.* NOTE: These are not necessarily standalone sentences, they are concepts.

'X' represents the strongest point against your argument. We call this the counter-argument (it does not have to be a counter-argument, it can qualify as well). 'A and B' represent the two strongest points for your argument. We call these your organization categories.

'Y' represents the position you will be taking – in other words, your stand on the prompt.

*Thanks to John Irish*