

English 9
Thesis development

In our last class, we discussed the high points of Aristotle's *Poetics*. From there, we began to look for confluences between Aristotle's ideas and Aeschylus's *Agamemnon*.

Your task (over the next week) is to write a paper in which you make an argument about the relationship of the play to one or more of the points from Aristotle.

First, write a thesis. **Have 2 or 3 thesis statement attempts ready to roll when we meet again on Tuesday (tomorrow).**

The thesis should be concise, arguable, impersonal, and exigent:

Concise: It should get to the point efficiently. If you need to make two sentences, the first one will establish the arrangement of the paper (the map) and the second will state the argument itself.

Arguable: It will express an idea controversial enough that an intelligent person might disagree with it.

Impersonal: Rather than stating, "I think," it will make its argument outright.

Exigent: The thesis itself will make clear that the argument should exist, that it has something real and important to say.

The thesis will fall at the end of a short introductory paragraph. That paragraph will begin in a memorable way (you may use "I" to tell a short anecdote or to express a personal thought) and proceed, orienting the reader about important issues and establishing your own ethos (credibility, authority) as a writer, to the thesis statement, which should be the last sentence of that paragraph.

Be aware of these possible thesis pitfalls:

Thesis Error #1: The Non-Thesis Thesis

- it summarizes
- it does not argue (it considers, examines)

Thesis Error #2: The Overly Broad Thesis

- it refers to a class of ideas

Thesis Error #3: The List-Essay Thesis

- it invites a list of arbitrarily arranged supporting arguments

Thesis Error #4: The Incontestable Thesis

- it's not controversial

Thesis Error #5: The Research Paper Thesis

- it takes on an issue that can be solved with a fact that can be looked up