

**EXERCISE MLA 1-1 Thesis statements in MLA papers** To read about thesis statements, see MLA-1a in *A Writer's Reference*, Sixth Edition.

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Circle the letter of the sentence in each pair that would work well as the thesis statement for a research paper from ten to fifteen pages long. Remember that a thesis should be a central idea that requires supporting evidence; it should be of adequate scope for a ten-to-fifteen-page paper; and it should be sharply focused. Example:

- (a) Although Thurgood Marshall and Martin Luther King, Jr., agreed that integration was a central goal of the civil rights movement, they did not see eye to eye on methods of achieving it.
- b. Civil rights leaders Thurgood Marshall and Martin Luther King, Jr., were similar in many ways, but they had their differences too.
- 1a. Residents of the District of Columbia must pay federal income taxes, along with their own local income taxes, even though they are denied voting representation in the United States Congress.
- b. Residents of the District of Columbia should fight for voting representation in Congress with every means available: media campaigns, pressure for a constitutional amendment, and court action.
- 2a. When a woman suffering from postpartum psychosis does something terrible, such as injuring or killing her child, she obviously needs help.
- b. When a woman suffering from postpartum psychosis injures or kills her child, she should be treated for mental illness rather than charged as a criminal.
- 3a. Political and economic conditions in the early twentieth century help explain the popularity of Marcus Garvey's Back to Africa movement.
- b. Marcus Garvey founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association and initiated the popular Back to Africa movement.
- 4a. Because terrorists communicate with one another on the Internet, the US government should enact laws that restrict Americans' right to computer privacy.
- b. American citizens must give up many of their privacy rights so that the US government can find and convict political terrorists.
- 5a. Online grocery stores were doomed to fail because today's shoppers are too shortsighted to see the benefits of purchasing food online.

- b. Many companies offering online grocery shopping have failed because of insufficient start-up capital, delivery problems, and poor advertising.
- 6a. Seasonal affective disorder, common in northern countries such as Norway and Sweden, is a debilitating condition that affects many people during the winter months.
  - b. Because light therapy and antidepressants do not always help those suffering from seasonal affective disorder, patients should also consider dietary changes and supplements.
- 7a. Although today's Republicans usually side with business interests rather than with environmental ones, many Republicans throughout American history recognized the importance of protecting the environment.
  - b. Although today's Republicans usually side with business interests rather than with environmental ones, Richard Nixon recognized that protecting the environment would be politically astute.
- 8a. There are both similarities and differences between the US AIDS epidemic that broke out in 1980 and the Black Death that occurred hundreds of years ago in the Middle Ages.
  - b. The US AIDS epidemic in 1980 had much in common with the Black Death of the Middle Ages: Both began mysteriously, terrified the general public, and seemed to some people to be God's punishment for sinful behavior.
- 9a. The phrase "separation of church and state" does not appear in the US Constitution; Thomas Jefferson coined it in a famous letter explaining the First Amendment.
  - b. Americans must continue to maintain the separation of church and state in order to protect religious minorities and to protect religion itself from domination by the state.
- 10a. Wyatt Earp's law-and-order reputation is a myth based chiefly on a poorly documented biography written early in the twentieth century.
  - b. Historians have shown that the reputations of many heroes of the Old West were based primarily on myths.