# Explain or Argue?

Sort social studies thesis statements by purpose.

**AWH.P.4.1** "Summarize and paraphrase, integrate evidence, and cite sources to create written products, research projects, and presentations for multiple purposes related to social studies content. Compose informative essays and written products..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

### INFORMATIVE THESIS

An informative thesis tells what a text will explain about a topic. Its main purpose is to help readers understand, not to persuade them to accept a judgment.

Inca roads and messengers linked communities across the Andes.

### ARGUMENTATIVE CLAIM

An argumentative claim takes a position that someone could reasonably challenge. The writer must support that position with reasons and credible evidence.

Local governments should limit short-term rentals because residents need stable housing.

## 1 SORT

8 items

For Part 1, circle EXPLAIN or ARGUE for each statement; for Part 2, choose one item from each category and explain how you knew where it belonged.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **1.** | 1. The Silk Roads connected distant regions through trade, travel, and the exchange of ideas. | EXPLAIN ARGUE |
| **2.** | 2. Industrialization changed factory work by concentrating workers in cities and increasing wage labor. | EXPLAIN ARGUE |
| **3.** | 3. Tax inequality was the most important cause of unrest before the French Revolution. | EXPLAIN ARGUE |
| **4.** | 4. After World War I, new borders reshaped states and minority populations in Eastern Europe. | EXPLAIN ARGUE |
| **5.** | 5. The Berlin airlift was a more effective response to the blockade than an armed convoy would have been. | EXPLAIN ARGUE |
| **6.** | 6. The Ottoman Empire's millet system did more to preserve religious communities than to create equal rights. | EXPLAIN ARGUE |
| **7.** | 7. Public memorials should include accounts from colonized peoples to present a fuller history of empire. | EXPLAIN ARGUE |
| **8.** | 8. The Columbian Exchange moved crops, animals, and diseases between the Americas and Afro-Eurasia. | EXPLAIN ARGUE |

## 2 PROVE IT

Explain your thinking

Pick two items from Part 1. For each one, tell how you knew where it belonged.

**ITEM #** _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

**ITEM #** _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

## 3 MAKE YOUR OWN

One of each

Write one new informative thesis and one new argumentative claim about social studies topics not used on this page.

**EXPLAIN** _____

**ARGUE** _____

**CHALLENGE**

Write a two-sentence mini-argument using your argumentative claim as the first sentence; in the second sentence, name specific historical evidence and a credible source you would check for it.

ANSWER KEY

# Explain or Argue?

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## PART 1 · SORT

| # | ITEM | CATEGORY | WHY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1. The Silk Roads connected distant regions through trade, travel, and the exchange of ideas. | **EXPLAIN** | It identifies connections the writer would explain without making a judgment. |
| 2 | 2. Industrialization changed factory work by concentrating workers in cities and increasing wage labor. | **EXPLAIN** | It previews changes the writer would explain. |
| 3 | 3. Tax inequality was the most important cause of unrest before the French Revolution. | **ARGUE** | It ranks one cause above others, a position that requires evidence. |
| 4 | 4. After World War I, new borders reshaped states and minority populations in Eastern Europe. | **EXPLAIN** | It identifies a historical change the writer would explain. |
| 5 | 5. The Berlin airlift was a more effective response to the blockade than an armed convoy would have been. | **ARGUE** | It makes a debatable comparison between two responses. |
| 6 | 6. The Ottoman Empire's millet system did more to preserve religious communities than to create equal rights. | **ARGUE** | It makes a debatable judgment about the system's effects. |
| 7 | 7. Public memorials should include accounts from colonized peoples to present a fuller history of empire. | **ARGUE** | It takes a position about what memorials should include. |
| 8 | 8. The Columbian Exchange moved crops, animals, and diseases between the Americas and Afro-Eurasia. | **EXPLAIN** | It identifies exchanges the writer would explain. |

## PART 2 · PROVE IT

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item.

## PART 3 · MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **EXPLAIN**: Ancient Egyptian rulers used irrigation and grain storage to manage food supplies.
- **ARGUE**: Historians should give the Haitian Revolution more attention in surveys of Atlantic history because it challenged both slavery and colonial rule.

**Challenge:** Historians should give the Haitian Revolution more attention in surveys of Atlantic history because it challenged both slavery and colonial rule. I would check a translation of Haiti's 1804 declaration of independence in a university library's primary-source collection for evidence about those challenges.

Part 2 responses should identify a feature of each chosen statement, such as an explanation of a historical change or a debatable judgment. For Part 3, accept other accurate social studies topics when the informative thesis explains and the argumentative claim takes a supportable position.