Explain or Argue?

Sort social studies thesis statements by purpose.

MWH.P.4 "Develop a variety of evidence-based written products designed for multiple purposes. Summarize and paraphrase, integrate evidence, and cite sources to create written products, research projects..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

INFORMATIVE THESIS

An informative thesis states what a piece of writing will explain. It may describe a change or cause, but it does not ask readers to favor a choice.

Inca roads carried messages and supplies through the Andes.

ARGUMENTATIVE CLAIM

An argumentative claim takes a position that evidence and reasoning can defend against another view. It often favors one choice over another.

Ancient Rome should have funded aqueduct repairs instead of gladiator games.

1 SORT

8 items

Circle EXPLAIN or ARGUE for each item, then choose two numbered items for Part 2 and explain the clue that led you to each choice.

1.	The printing press increased access to books and helped new ideas spread across Europe.	EXPLAIN ARGUE
2.	The United States should have joined the League of Nations rather than staying out.	EXPLAIN ARGUE
3.	The Columbian Exchange spread crops across the Atlantic and brought Old World diseases to the Americas.	EXPLAIN ARGUE
4.	Industrialization changed work by moving many workers from farms to factories.	EXPLAIN ARGUE
5.	Museums should return the Benin Bronzes to Nigeria rather than keep them abroad.	EXPLAIN ARGUE
6.	During the Irish Potato Famine, British officials should have expanded relief rather than relied on market forces.	EXPLAIN ARGUE
7.	Governments should remove statues of colonial rulers instead of displaying them in public squares.	EXPLAIN ARGUE
8.	Decolonization after World War II reshaped political borders and national identities in Africa.	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 different social studies topics; label each.

EXPLAIN _____

ARGUE _____

CHALLENGE

Turn item 4 into an argumentative claim that names a competing course of action, then name one kind of historical source you could use to support it.

Explain or Argue?

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	The printing press increased access to books and helped new ideas spread across Europe.	**EXPLAIN**	States historical effects without favoring a choice.
2	The United States should have joined the League of Nations rather than staying out.	**ARGUE**	Favors one historical choice over another.
3	The Columbian Exchange spread crops across the Atlantic and brought Old World diseases to the Americas.	**EXPLAIN**	Explains effects of a historical exchange.
4	Industrialization changed work by moving many workers from farms to factories.	**EXPLAIN**	States a historical change without recommending a response.
5	Museums should return the Benin Bronzes to Nigeria rather than keep them abroad.	**ARGUE**	Recommends one response to a disputed issue.
6	During the Irish Potato Famine, British officials should have expanded relief rather than relied on market forces.	**ARGUE**	Judges two possible government responses.
7	Governments should remove statues of colonial rulers instead of displaying them in public squares.	**ARGUE**	Advocates a choice over an alternative.
8	Decolonization after World War II reshaped political borders and national identities in Africa.	**EXPLAIN**	Identifies historical changes to 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**: Trade across the Indian Ocean connected East African ports with merchants from Arabia and South Asia.
- **ARGUE**: Cities should preserve historic immigrant neighborhoods instead of replacing them with luxury developments.

Challenge: Nineteenth-century lawmakers should have required factory safety inspections rather than leaving safety decisions to factory owners. Factory inspection reports from that period could help support this claim.

For Part 2, accept explanations that identify a statement's purpose, not just a signal word. For example, item 2 favors joining the League of Nations over staying out, while item 4 explains a change in work without recommending a choice.