

## Exercise walk-through

Identifying the overarching thesis ■ 2.5

eXercise

## You must be able to

- distinguish a thesis from a topic and from an opening sentence
- locate a thesis that is stated late or implied
- state a thesis in your own words in one sentence
- test a candidate thesis against the whole passage

## Method — Thesis, not topic

A **topic** names the subject; a **thesis** makes a disputable claim about it. “The history of the census” is a topic. “The census has always measured what the state wished to control” is a thesis.

## Method — Where it hides

A thesis may open the passage, close it, or never be stated outright. Where it is implied, construct it: what single sentence would every paragraph be supporting?

## Method — The test

A candidate thesis is right if each paragraph can be shown to serve it. If two paragraphs do not, either the thesis is wrong or you have found a genuine digression — and saying which is part of the analysis.

## Practice 2.1 ■ 2 marks

State the difference between a topic and a thesis.

## Solution 2.1

Method: Thesis, not topic

### Worked steps

a topic names the subject **B1**; a thesis makes a disputable claim about it **B1**.

## Practice 2.2 ■ 2 marks

State the test for whether a candidate thesis is correct.



## Solution 2.2

Method: The test

### Worked steps

each paragraph should be shown to serve it **B1**; if several do not, the candidate is wrong **B1**.

## Practice 2.3 ■ 1 mark

A passage never states a thesis outright.

- (a) State what you should do.
- (b) State the evidence you would use.

## Solution 2.3

Method: Where it hides

### Worked steps

(a) construct it: write the one sentence every paragraph supports **B1**. (b) the claims of the individual paragraphs **B1**.

## Exam-style 3.1 ■ 1 mark

“The rise of the suburb” is best described as

**A** a thesis

**B** a topic

**C** commentary

**D** evidence

## Solution 3.1

**A** a thesis

**B** a topic 

**C** commentary

**D** evidence

### Worked steps

**B.** it names a subject without claiming anything.

## Exam-style 3.2 ■ 1 mark

Two paragraphs do not serve your candidate thesis. This means

- A** the passage is badly written
- B** either the thesis is wrong or those paragraphs are a digression
- C** the thesis is proved
- D** there is no thesis

## Solution 3.2

Method: The test

- A the passage is badly written
- B either the thesis is wrong or those paragraphs are a digression 
- C the thesis is proved
- D there is no thesis

### Worked steps

- B. both possibilities remain open and must be tested.

## Exam-style 3.3 ■ 1 mark

A passage's final sentence states a strong claim not made earlier.

- (a) State whether this can be the thesis.
- (b) Explain how you would check.



## Solution 3.3

Method: Where it hides

### Worked steps

(a) yes — a thesis may be stated late **B1**. (b) check whether each earlier paragraph can be read as building toward it **B1**; if they can, it is the thesis rather than a new point **B1**.