



Provide Models

MODELING WRITING IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

This pre-writing essay assignment¹ models for students how to approach an essay question. They are prompted to recall what they have learned about a topic, evaluate it in relation to the question, and draw a conclusion that will become their working thesis for the essay. These templates guide them through the first steps of the writing process and provide the material they will use when they begin to draft their essays.

Name _____

Date _____

All the President's Men Essay

We have just finished watching the movie, *All the President's Men*, which tells the story of how *The Washington Post* discovered the truth behind the Watergate burglaries in 1972. Our next step is to write an essay in response to this question: *Was the Watergate Scandal newsworthy? Why or why not?*

Before writing our rough draft, we need to describe what happened, determine whether or not the Watergate scandal fits the specific criteria items for a newsworthy story, and create a thesis statement. Use the following template to complete these steps.

STEP 1: STORY/EVENT

What is the story or event?

Write a brief overview. The cue words provided will help you structure your summary. This overview will become part of your essay's **introduction**.

Story / Event: _____

First, _____

Then, _____

Next, _____

After that, _____

Finally, _____

¹ Adapted from Landmark High School Social Sciences Department



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STEP 2: NEWSWORTHY CRITERIA

What makes a newsworthy story?

Write at least one question about the Watergate Scandal for each criteria item and note your answer. The first question is done as a model for you. Use *who, what, when, where, why,* and *how* to help you frame each question. Once you've asked and answered each question, check the yes or no box to indicate whether the Watergate Scandal meets this criterion for a newsworthy story. You'll use this section to help you write your essay's **body paragraphs**.

Impact:

Who was affected by the Watergate Scandal? Why were they affected?

Yes No

Conflict:

Yes No

Prominence:

Yes No

Proximity:

Yes No



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Freshness:

Yes No

Novelty:

Yes No

STEP 3: THESIS STATEMENT

Was the Watergate Scandal newsworthy? Why or why not?

Write a thesis statement about the Watergate Scandal. Your thesis should answer the question above and refer to at least three of the newsworthy criteria. This thesis statement will become the last sentence of your essay's **introduction**.

(For a reminder on how to write a thesis statement, see the model on the next page.)

Topic: _____

Controlling Idea: _____

3 (or more) supports:

Thesis Statement:



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THESIS STATEMENTS

A thesis statement has several parts: a topic, a controlling idea, and an indication of what evidence will be used to support the controlling idea. A model is provided below. Follow this model when you write your thesis statement about the Watergate Scandal.

Topic: (what the essay is about)

_____ SODA _____

Controlling Idea: (the point you will make)

_____ is not a healthy drink _____

3 (or more) supports: (your main arguments in brief)

_____ it's sugary; it has harmful chemicals; it has no nutritional value _____

Thesis Statement: (combine the above into one sentence)

_____ Soda is not a healthy choice for a beverage because it contains no nutritional _____
value, high levels of sugar, and harmful chemicals. _____

HOW DOES THIS PROVIDE MODELS?

- This formatted example gives a template to help students structure their writing and models of potential questions and the creation of a thesis statement.

Providing models allows students to visualize the requirements of an assignment.