

## Literary Analysis Essentials:

One of the most important, if not the most important, parts of a literary analysis is the **thesis**.

The thesis must be:

- **Arguable** - Could someone reasonably argue the opposing viewpoint?
- **Provable** - Is there evidence to support your position?
- **Worth proving** - Does it add something new to the reader's understanding of the literature? Does it pass the "So what?" test?

*What to do if you are struggling to come up with a brilliant thesis:*

*Since you want your thesis to be unique you must come up with ideas that may be a little more **abstract**.*

1. One tactic to use if you feel that the thesis you have thought of is too commonplace is **Antithetical Metacognition**. This is when you **think oppositely**.

For example let's say that the thesis I have thought of is: "In *1984*, Winston and Julia having sex is a political act that demonstrates their own personal brand of rebellion against The Party." If this thesis seems to be one that everyone else will have thought of as well, try its opposite: "In *1984*, the sexual relationship between Winston and Julia, while it appears to be about rebellion on the surface, is actually more about both characters' ingrained need for conformity."

**When using this technique, make sure that you are still able to find support for this "opposite" thesis.**

2. Another tactic you can use to think of an insightful and unique thesis is **asking questions**.

As you are reading the novel, write down any questions that you have about any parts of the novel or the characters. Then choose one of them and answer it as your thesis.

For example: Let's say as I was reading *1984*, one of the questions I came up with was: Why does Julia always seem to do whatever she pleases with no thought about how the other people in the book are faring?

Then I would try to answer this question: Julia's need to seek immediate pleasure for only herself demonstrates that, while she appears to be different from The Party, she is actually a mini-version of the larger vampire. That would be my thesis.

**Once again, make sure you are able to sufficiently support the thesis that you come up with.**