

Identifying the Thesis Statement

Part I. Circle or highlight the thesis statement in each text below:

Two groups of teens, the Greasers and the Socs, have a bitter rivalry that stems from socioeconomic differences. They do have some common interests: literature, music, and sunsets. Like all youth, they also have to come to terms with fear, love, and sorrow.

Authors' backgrounds often influence the settings and topics of their books. Scott O'Dell moved a lot as a kid. Nevertheless, everywhere he lived was in Southern California, near Los Angeles. The settings for O'Dell's books are often the frontier or the sea, and he writes about Indians, Spaniards or Chicanos.

A witness to the social isolation resulting from not speaking a language, Esperanza is determined to learn to speak and write English well in order to determine her own destiny. A central theme in the *House on Mango Street* is the idea of language as a dominant force. Throughout the book, Esperanza observes people around her who feel alienated because they can't communicate effectively in English.

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Part II. Match each text with the best thesis statement.

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| 1. _____ | Although their social status divides them, their shared adolescent passions unite them. While the Socs and the Greasers begin to discover their common interests, Ponyboy's best friend, Johnny, kills a member of the Socs and a hurricane of events spirals out of control. | a. Paul Fleishman's use of characterization in <i>Seedfolks</i> weaves thirteen distinct voices into the tapestry of one amazing story. |
| 2. _____ | Based on a real-life story of a young Indian girl, Karana jumps ship to stay with her younger brother who had been abandoned on an island off the California coast. | b. Scott O'Dell's familiarity with the cultures and landscape of southern California may have inspired <i>Island of the Blue Dolphins</i> . |
| 3. _____ | When a young girl plants a few lima beans in an abandoned lot in Cleveland, the barriers of language, culture, stereotypes and prejudices come toppling down. One by one, characters from all ends of the globe evolve and transform as they change a trash-filled inner-city lot into a productive and beautiful garden. | c. Class warfare, a predominant theme in <i>The Outsiders</i> , involves two groups of teens who share a bitter rivalry that stems from socioeconomic differences. |
| 4. _____ | In a series of vignettes, a young Chicana named Esperanza begins to mature as both a young woman and an emerging writer. | d. Sandra Cisneros' youth in Chicago's Spanish-speaking neighborhoods is reflected in 12-year-old Esperanza. |

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Part III. Choose and write in the best thesis statement for each text.

1.

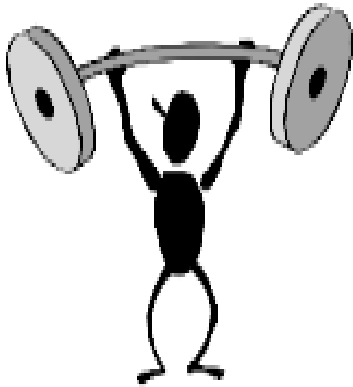
As the short vignettes unfold, Esperanza grapples with her own identity. From changing her name to allying herself with a wild friend, Esperanza uses her writing to reconcile her relationship with her community and culture.

a.	The struggle for identity is a common theme in coming-of-age novels.
b.	A powerful theme in Sandra Cisneros' <i>House on Mango Street</i> is the struggle for self-definition.
c.	Esperanza purposefully sets herself apart from her community.
d.	The author addresses many important themes in <i>House on Mango Street</i> .

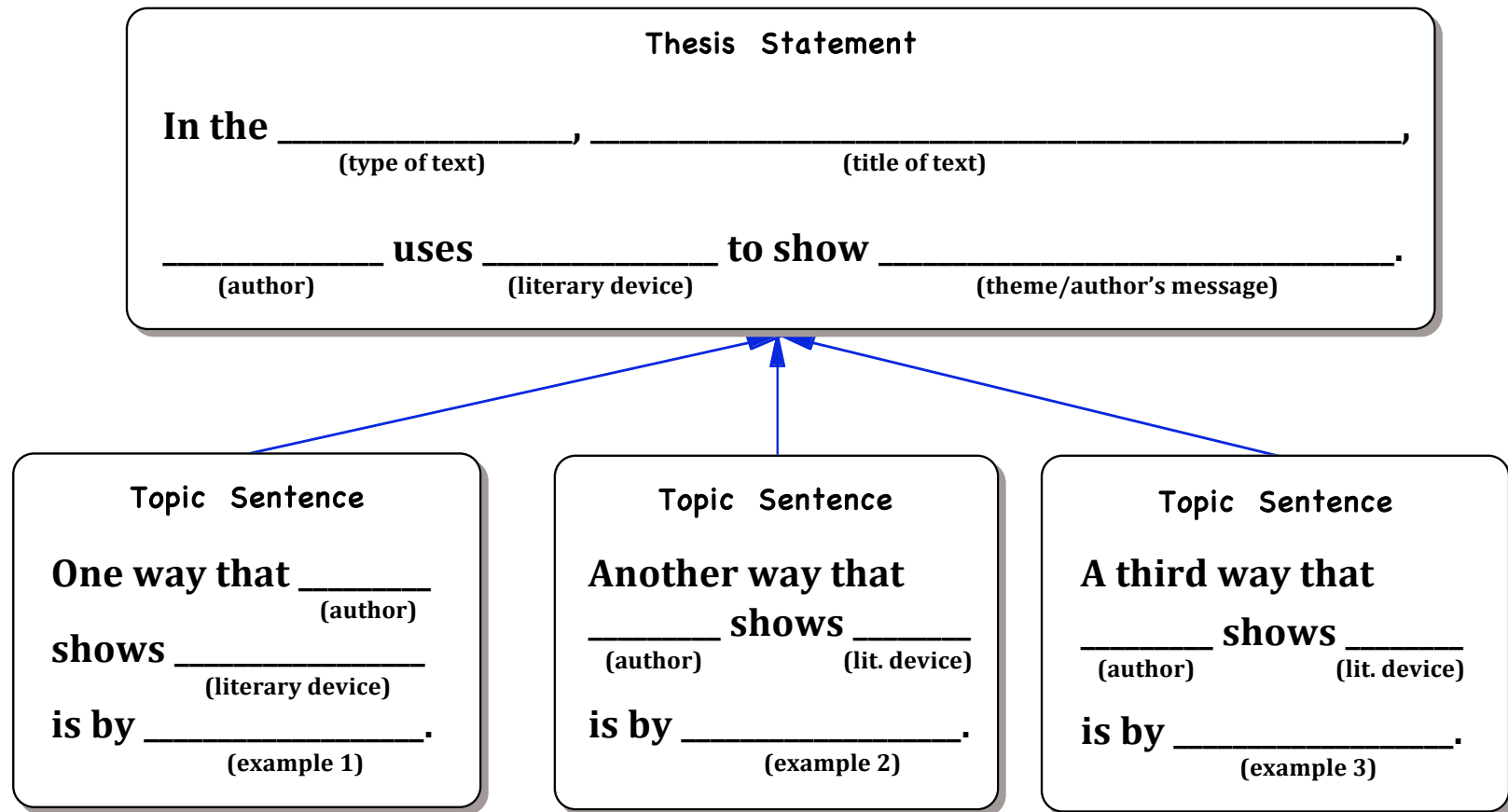
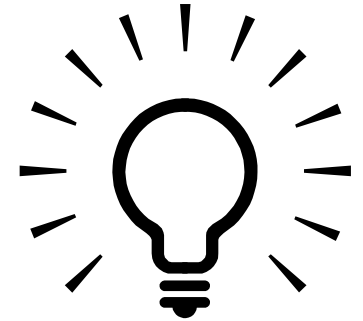
2.

Esperanza observes people around her who feel alienated because they can't communicate effectively in English. A witness to the social isolation inflicted by language, Esperanza is determined to learn to speak and write English well in order to determine her own destiny.

a.	It's sad that once Mamacita's child learns English, he no longer speaks in Spanish.
b.	Sandra Cisneros thinks it's important to speak English.
c.	Esperanza's father would not have gone hungry had he spoken English.
d.	A central theme in the <i>House on Mango Street</i> is the idea of language as a dominant force.



Supporting A Thesis Statement



Prove it!

Statement	Supporting Facts/Examples
The doctor in <u>The Pearl</u> represents colonial society's oppression of native cultures	<p>When Kino first takes his son to see the doctor, Kino doesn't have money so the doctor refuses to help him.</p> <p>The doctor's condescending attitude in his initial treatment of Kino shows that the doctor, and the European colonizers he represents, feel superior.</p> <p>The doctor is only interested in helping Kino when he finds out about the pearl.</p>
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