



Answer Key for Thesis Clinic

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- The writings of these Puritans clearly show that they valued religion and not freedom.
(By saying “religion and not freedom” the writer makes it clear some might disagree with their thesis. BUT, since there is no support, this claim comes off as “opinionated”—it leaves the reading asking, “How? Why?”)
- Though they wrote of “limited government” to protect their religion, the Puritans’ dark view of human nature and their hierarchical ideas about family made them no friends of freedom.
(The claim is the same as in the previous thesis, but notice how adding support transforms an opinion into an argument.)
- Elizabeth Cady Stanton was truly a founding figure in the American women’s rights movement.
(This is a broadly accepted description, not a claim. It is difficult to imagine anyone arguing against this assertion.)
- Why, then, did this advocate of women’s rights put so much emphasis on the duties of wife and mother? I will answer this question by investigating themes of feminine morality and religion in Stanton’s writings.
(It is good to pose questions in your introduction, but the thesis must answer the question with a claim. This thesis provides support, but for what?)
- This essay will explain Stanton’s important contribution to women’s rights by closely reading and comparing three speeches she delivered in the mid-nineteenth century.
(Saying Stanton’s contribution was “important” gives the thesis a little edge, but the claim is too vague to be tested. Support might have honed and strengthened the claim, but “close reading” and “comparison” are methods, not support.)
- Stanton advanced the women’s rights movement in three important ways: by linking it with abolitionism, by emphasizing religious activism, and by arguing for God-given equality.
(By itself, “Stanton advanced women’s rights” is not much edgier than the previous claim she made an “important” contribution. But notice how adding support renders the claim specific, and thus more challenging.)
- Stanton advanced women’s rights by channeling the religious idealism of the abolitionist movement into an argument for the God-given equality of women.



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(Yes, this thesis advances the same claim and uses the same support as the last one. But why is it better? It is better because the support is not simply listed; it is organized to show what influenced what. These are not just three points on a laundry list.)