Lesson plan example: 12th grade ELA, thesis statements

Example 6 of 6 · 48 minutes · from draftmylesson.com/blog/lesson-plan-example

Standard reference	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1.A. Introduce precise, knowledgeable claims, distinguish them from opposing claims, and organize claims, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. Use this reference only where Common Core applies.
Objective	Students will revise a weak thesis statement into a defensible, specific claim with at least two of three quality markers: arguable, narrow, evidence-anchored.
Materials	• 6 sample thesis statements (range from weak to strong) on a handout • Revision rubric (3 criteria, on the back of the handout) • Prompt for the upcoming essay: "Does technology make us more or less connected to other people?" • Student notebooks

Step	Time	What happens
Hook	5 min	Read this thesis aloud: "Technology is bad." Pause. Read this one: "High schools should replace one weekly homework assignment with a device-free collaborative study period because the change would protect practice time while increasing face-to-face problem solving." Ask: "Which claim gives a writer more to prove, and why?"
Direct instruction	10 min	Introduce the three quality markers. Arguable: a reasonable person could disagree. Narrow: scoped to a specific population, time, or mechanism. Evidence-anchored: hints at the kind of evidence the paper will use. Walk through the 6 sample theses, scoring each on the rubric out loud.
Guided practice	12 min	Pairs receive three of the weak theses and revise each one to meet at least two of the three markers. Share two revisions on the board and let the class score them.
Independent practice	15 min	Each student drafts three candidate theses in response to the essay prompt. They pick their strongest and write one paragraph defending why it meets the rubric.
Exit ticket	6 min	Submit one thesis statement plus a one-sentence justification. The justification must reference at least two of the three quality markers.

Why this works

Twelfth graders shut down at abstract feedback ("be more specific"). The three-marker rubric gives them concrete language to apply themselves and to push back on a peer. Asking for three candidate theses before picking one discourages the "first attempt is the final answer" instinct that produces weak senior essays.

Sources: https://www.thecorestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/11-12/
Check the standard adopted by your state, district or school before teaching. Adapt timing and materials to your students.