

# Developing a Thesis Statement

## OBJECTIVES FOR THIS LESSON:

To understand that a thesis statement is the main opinion or idea that your entire essay will try to support or prove.

To see that the thesis must respond to all parts of the DBQ and must also be a guide for using the primary sources.

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*The primary source documents for this lesson are displayed on the next three pages. All of the exercises for this lesson are based on these primary sources and the background information provided here.*

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## THE PRIMARY SOURCES AND THE EXERCISES

Ten primary sources are provided for this lesson. All of them are visual primary sources. However, we have provided a good deal of background information with each source to help clarify its significance. The sources all have to do with the Industrial Revolution and its impact in the 1800s on Western societies, lands colonized by the West and other non-Western societies. The DBQ used in this lesson will focus on these matters, as will a series of possible thesis statements answering that DBQ.

## INTRODUCING THE LESSON

## KEY CONCEPTS AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

The primary sources and the exercises for this lesson will be used to help you think about what is perhaps the most important single part of any DBQ essay, the thesis statement.

1. A **thesis statement** is the main idea or viewpoint you will develop in your answer to the DBQ. That is, the thesis is a clear statement of what you hope to prove in your essay.
2. Your thesis statement should **respond directly to all aspects of the question** asked. Be sure your thesis is not about just one part of the question — or about a question that was not asked at all.
3. Your thesis statement should make a claim or state an opinion that you can back up in part with **evidence from the primary sources** and in part with your own **background knowledge**.
4. Think of **the thesis statement as a guide** for you in how to interpret and use the primary sources as evidence in your essay. That is, all your references to sources and other information should help in some way to support the thesis statement.

## Lesson 4 — Developing a Thesis Statement

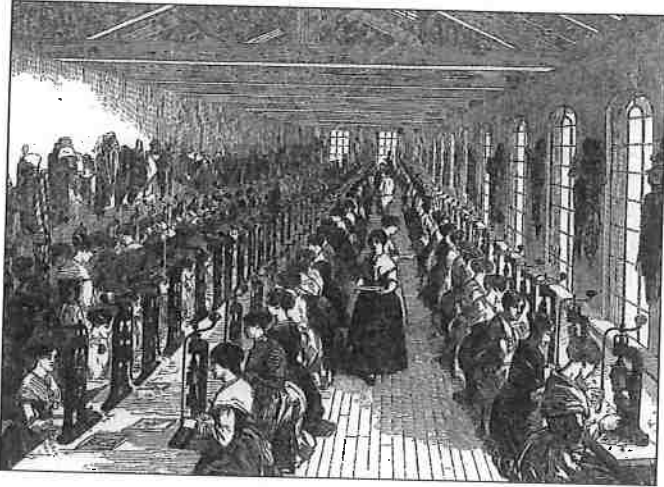
# The Documents

## Industry and Empire in the 19th Century

### Document 1

Steel pin manufacturing in England in the early 1800s.

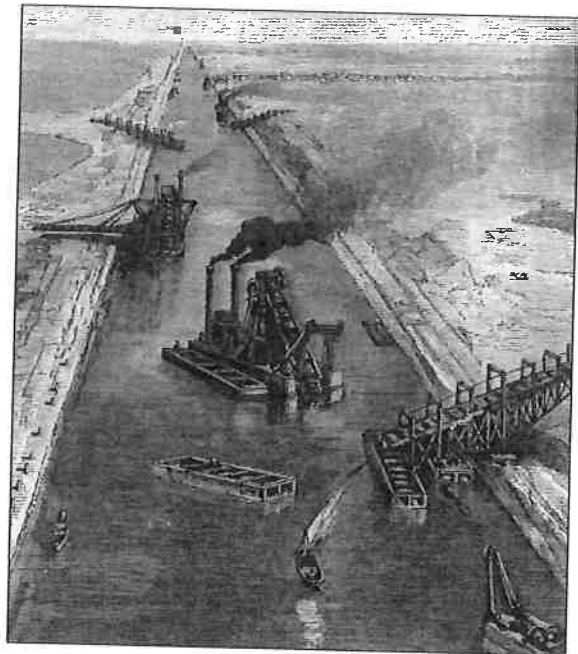
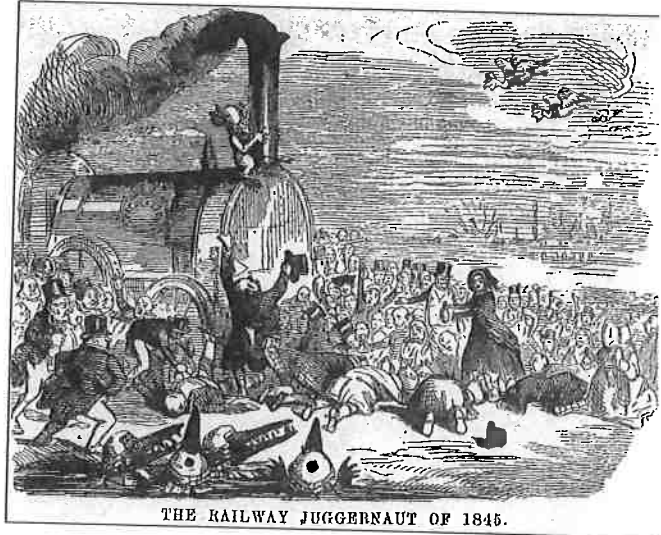
*Stock Montage, Inc.*



### Document 2

Railroads made England a huge national market. In the 1840s, enthusiasm about railroads led thousands to invest money in them. This cartoon makes fun of foolish investors who lost money when railroad overbuilding led to the failure of many railway companies.

*Cartoons from "Punch"*



### Document 3

The Suez Canal opened in 1869. It was built by a French-Egyptian company. However, it soon became most important to Great Britain, since it shortened by thousands of miles the trip from Great Britain to its most important colony, India.

*Stock Montage, Inc.*



### Document 4

In 1875, Egypt's growing debt forced it to let Great Britain buy Egypt's shares in the Suez Canal. This cartoon comments on that deal. It gave the British direct control over the canal. As the cartoon points out, Britain's real interest in the canal was India, the "key" to its mighty empire.

*Cartoons from "Punch"*

## Lesson 4 — Developing a Thesis Statement

### The Documents

#### Document 5

A traditional weaver in India before the British helped develop widespread industrial textile production in that nation.

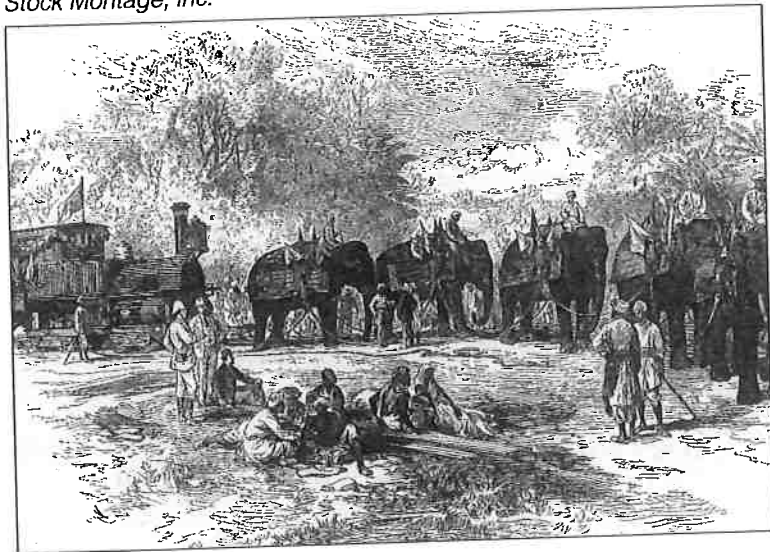
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#### Document 6

The arrival of the first locomotive on newly laid railroad tracks in India, mid-1800s. India's early railroads were owned mainly by British businessmen and were built largely under British supervision.

*Stock Montage, Inc.*



#### Document 7

Businessman Cecil Rhodes pictured as a giant bringing material progress to all of Africa. The full caption reads: "The Rhodes Colossus: Striding from Cape Town to Cairo." Rhodes was bold and ruthless. His dream was for an Africa modernized by British mines, railroads, telegraphs and other industries — and held together by British rule.

*Cartoons from "Punch"*



## Lesson 4 — Developing a Thesis Statement

### The Documents



#### Document 8

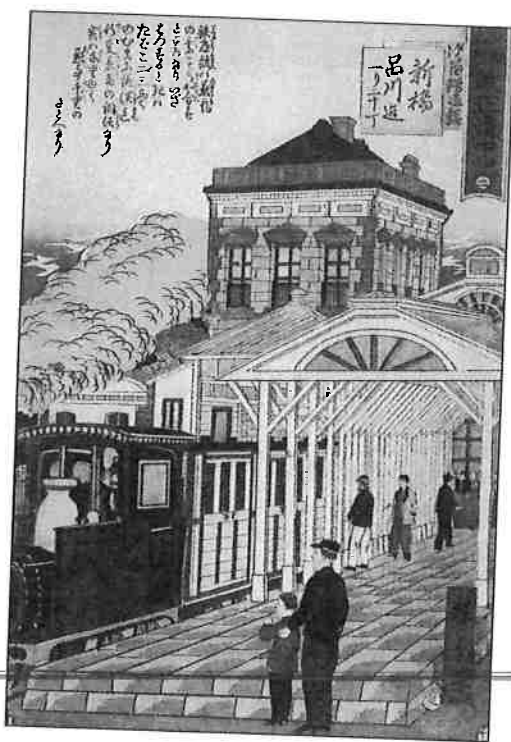
In the early 1800s, Great Britain fostered the opium trade in China. (The British needed a product that the Chinese would buy in exchange for their tea and silk.) In the 1830s, the Chinese government tried to ban this trade. This led to two Opium Wars during which Great Britain forced China to grant major trading privileges. This illustration shows British warships in the background firing on Chinese vessels in one battle of the Opium Wars.

*Stock Montage, Inc.*

#### Document 9

In the late 1800s, some Chinese leaders hoped to adopt the Western technology and knowledge needed to fight off Western control. One who felt this way was the young emperor Guangxu. However, many opposed such reform efforts, including Guangxu's aunt, the Empress Dowager Cixi. She was still the real power in China at this time. This British cartoon shows her disciplining the reform-minded emperor and thwarting his reform efforts.

*Cartoons from "Punch"*



#### Document 10

In the late 1800s, Japan sent experts to Europe and the U.S. to bring back the best ideas about science, education, technology and government. With amazing speed, Japan adopted what it needed to modernize. Hinting at these changes is this painting of the new Tokyo-Yokohama railway, built in 1872. It is from a series called "Famous Places on the Tokaido: a Record of the Process of Reform," issued only seven years after the Meiji Restoration.

*Hiroshige III. © Asian Art & Archaeology, Inc./CORBIS*