Making the Case: Samples

Sample 1: Starting in the 1890s, the legislatures of the southern states began to pass a series of laws which by intent and practice removed African Americans from the voting population. Twenty years after the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment, African-American men found themselves steadily disfranchised through legal chicaneries like grandfather clauses, literacy tests, and all-white primaries. Historians have long wondered why this new spate of legislation appeared so long after the failure of the Republican Party in 1877. If Reconstruction ended black Americans' dreams of meaningful political equality, why did Southern whites delay for over a decade their efforts to disfranchise blacks? Perhaps the new measures signaled not the continuation of old forms of racial control, but the rise of a new, more hostile form of racial thought among white Southerners. Legal disfranchisement did not begin until twelve years after the end of Reconstruction, for it took an economic downturn in the South and the coming of age of the first generation of southern African Americans born into freedom to trigger overt legal efforts to keep blacks away from the polls.

Sample 2: The continuing trend of American westward expansion reached Mexico in the early nineteenth century and manifested in the Mexican-American War. After Mexico gained independence from Spain in 1821, the policy toward the United States changed. Instead of the strict border policies as under Spain, Mexico welcomed Americans: a decision they would soon regret. Americans migrated to Mexico in droves. Eventually, more Americans lived in the Texas than Mexicans. The led to Texas breaking away from Mexico and the beginning of the Mexican-American War. The Mexican-American War was not only a quest for increased territory, but also a symbol of America's racial misconception of the inferiority of non-white peoples, manifested in the motives, justifications and reactions to the war.

Sample 3: This problem of representation arose as a direct result of market forces in antebellum America. As fixing identity in an ever-expanding and increasingly anonymous public sphere became an ever more infeasible task, weak surrogate means arose. When Lewis Woodson wrote to Samuel Cornish that "nothing is more common in men, than to associate a cause, with him who advocates it," he may just as sagely have applied his formulation to ethnic and national groups. Nothing was more common in the antebellum North than to associate a people with the individuals who represented it. For this reason, black leaders incessantly warned their working-class brethren to consider the broader implications of their actions. In the 1840s, a southern black traveler noted this concern among Philadelphia's black elite: "the sight of one man, whatever may be his apparent

condition, is the sight of a community; and the errors and crimes of one, is adjudged as the criterion and character of the whole body." In a world wherein it was impossible to know the character of the ones with whom the average urbanite interacted, ethnic, racial, and national signifiers – however faulty as determinants of character – seemed to offer desperately needed cues.

Sample 4

1. Premises to thesis question
   a. German experience with tactical air power
   b. Elaborate defense system of the homeland
   c. German fighter designs extremely good
   d. Germany developed tactical fighter doctrine
2. The "fulcrum": restate problem and shift to proving thesis itself
   a. Production inadequacies
   b. Doctrinal problems
   c. These factors led to defeat despite apparent advantages
3. Conclusion (restate problem and thesis, explain significance)

Sample 5: Historians may argue about whether the Allied bombing of Germany helped end World War II, but none doubt the destructiveness of these campaigns. By the end of the conflict, Allied bomber forces were able to attack targets in Germany without encountering the serious opposition of German fighters. This is surprising, as Germany possessed many apparent advantages in its fighter force: long experience with tactical air power, good fighter designs, an elaborate system of homeland defense, and a well-developed tactical fighter doctrine. How, then, did the Allies become capable of bombing Germany with impunity? By the end of World War II, German air defense suffered from two limitations that doomed its capacity to protect the homeland: the limits of a fighter doctrine predicated on attack, and severe inadequacies in producing new fighters. These factors led to defeat despite Germany's apparent advantages.