

## Sample Thesis Paragraph

Historians have been maligned as camp-followers of victorious armies: they arrange the past to prove what has occurred was both necessary and good. This is especially a problem when scholars examine the development of their own political system, because there is an ever-present temptation for them to justify the institutions they live under. This tendency is very pronounced in studies of the Federalist political movement, the party of those who argued for the adoption of the constitution from 1787 to 1789. This misstep is present even in some of the most careful scholarship examining the period. For example, Matson and Onuf assert in their 1985 article “Toward a Republican Empire” that, “When faced with the challenges of nation-making on a continental scale in the 1780s, Americans discovered that they could no longer rely on the ideas that had justified and sustained resistance to British power” (Matson and Onuf 1985: 496). The grossest statement of this type of argument would be that, pulled by the strings of history and intellectual necessity, republican ideology was transformed in a way that made the adoption of the Federalist constitution of 1787 unavoidable. Although Matson and Onuf attempt to steer away from a telling of the American founding myth that presents it as utterly inescapable, in the end they commit to the same old story: the constitution was inevitable.

### Note:

1. The argument is in every sentence.
2. The argument gets more and more specific until the author tells you *exactly* what he will defend.
3. The entirety of the argument is given (the conclusion isn't a mystery to be revealed at the end of the essay).
4. There are no extraneous or grandiloquent sentences (i.e., “Since the dawn of time, man has wondered about the meaning of the cosmos.”); only sentences necessary to the argument are in this paragraph.
5. The thesis statement passes the test, “Can I disagree with this?”