* ***Do I answer the question?*** Re-reading the question prompt after constructing a working thesis can help you fix an argument that misses the focus of the question.
* ***Is my thesis statement specific enough?*** Thesis statements that are too vague often do not have a strong argument. If your thesis contains words like "good" or "successful," see if you could be more specific: *why* is something "good"; *what specifically* makes something "successful"?
* ***Does my essay support my thesis specifically and without wandering?*** If your thesis and the body of your essay do not seem to go together, one of them has to change. It's o.k. to change your working thesis to reflect things you have figured out in the course of writing your paper. Remember, always reassess and revise your writing as necessary.
* ***Does my thesis pass the "how and why?" test?*** If a reader's first response is "how?" or "why?" your thesis may be too open-ended and lack guidance for the reader. See what you can add to give the reader a better take on your position right from the beginning
* Example:
  + **Prompt**: Write an analysis of some aspect of Mark Twain's novel Huckleberry Finn.
  + **Thesis Statement**: *In Huckleberry Finn, Mark Twain develops a contrast between life on the river and life on the shore.*
  + **Prompt**: Using *To Kill A Mockingbird*, explain if first impressions are accurate.
  + **Thesis**: As she comes to know Mrs. Dubose and Boo Radley’s true personalities, Scout illustrates growth and maturity, proving that first impressions are not always accurate.