**Thesis Paragraph (thanks to Ms. Pellauer + Mr. Golding)**

After some preliminary research, you should be able to complete a **thesis paragraph** about your topic.  The paragraph must be typed, double-spaced, and shared with me on GoogleDocs.

Please **label the following (not necessarily in this order)** in your paragraph:

**The Problem**

* 1. You need to establish that there is a problem.  Describe the problem.  Why is it serious?  How does it impact us?  How does it impact the world?

**The Cause(s)**

* 1. What has caused this problem?  Where or when did it start?  Why does it persist?
  2. You will want to **include at least one concession here (Example: While many people feel that…)**

**The Solution(s)**

* 1. How can we fix this problem?  Can we solve all aspects of the problem?  What do the experts say?  What can every person in our class do to help fix this problem?  What should the audience take away from this?

**ALTERNATIVELY:**

|  |
| --- |
| Thesis: The argument I’m making:  Why this argument is valid/important/  1.  2.  (at least two reasons) |

|  |
| --- |
| Counterargument: this is a crucial part of your speech, because it provides an acknowledgement of the ‘other side’. If you can’t find one, then, your thesis probably isn’t debatable enough (no ‘other side’). Hence, there really is no ‘counterargument’ to neglecting kittens. |

*Sample Thesis Paragraph: Limiting Homework*

Everyone in this room knows about my problem.  It’s what keeps us up late at nights when we’d rather be sleeping or refreshing Facebook for the hundredth time.  *(hook)* We have too much homework on a daily basis that drastically decreases the quality of life for everyone in this room – from the teachers who assign it to those who have to do it.  Teachers may think that students need to practice new skills every day or keep moving forward in that Victorian novel, but at some point – perhaps after hour six of homework on Sunday afternoon - enough is enough.  (*defines problem)*

I suspect that students have always complained about the amount of homework given by teachers.  And, while a certain amount of homework is important for reinforcing new skills and knowledge, there is no need for 40 math problems per night when merely 10 will suffice.  Our homework problem is a result of three deeply unhealthy beliefs: (1) There are simply not enough elite college educations for every person who wants one; (2) More work equals better preparation; and (3) You cannot start competing for your seat at the Ivy table too early.  When first graders have homework assigned to them to “get them in the habit,” we need to reconsider why we have let these beliefs govern the way we approach something as sacred as education. (*origins of the problem)*

This problem does not impact the global community in the same way as water shortage or access to health care, but here is why it remains important: In the drive to read more, write more, prove more, we actually think less because what many students dwell on are not the ideas behind the assignments, but the shiny, sparkling grades that follow. Yes, there are still those who learn for learning’s sake, but we cannot deny that grade obsession nurtures an ugly, shortsighted, ego-driven beast inside us all.  This world hardly needs more beasts.  What we need are thoughtful, community-minded individuals who pursue ideas out of genuine curiosity, ethical duty – maybe even love.  *(counterargument)* The solution is to eliminate all homework over weekends.  To make this solution a reality, every person in this room needs to write advocacy letters to the Newton School Committee and Mayor Setti Warren.  We may not be able to address this problem on a large scale, but we can start right here at the place where we need it most. *(solution)*