**Thesis Statement Guide**

The first step to writing an excellent history paper is to have a strong, clear thesis statement. A good thesis statement does two things:

1. It is a clear answer to the essay question
2. It establishes the categories you will use to support your answer to the essay question.

Follow the steps below to write a strong thesis statement:

1. How will you answer the essay question? (Which civilization are you going to write about? Was it great or not great?)

2. What are the three best reasons to support your answer?

**Note – these should be general reasons that you could write an entire paragraph about. For example, if you argue that Mali was great, saying that Mansa Musa took 60,000 people with him to Mecca is too specific. You could not write a strong paragraph all about how that fact made Mali great. Instead, a better way to state your reason is “Mansa Musa’s leadership.”**

3. Write your thesis statement – one sentence that includes both your answer to the essay question and your three categories: