How to Write an Aha Connections Thesis

What is an aha connections thesis?
It is a thesis paper, generated by you, that addresses the Big Aha or big problem of the unit, using evidence gathered along the way.

1. Let's get started by gathering what you need.
   - Go back to the aha connections pages in your interactive notebook.
   - Look for the key ideas or concepts you identified from the unit.
   - Which lines of evidence best support these key ideas?
   - You are now going to use these lines of evidence in your thesis to support your key points.

2. Now, begin by writing your introductory paragraph.
   Introductory paragraph:
   State the purpose of the unit and the key ideas and concepts learned.
   (Hint: That's what you just identified in the four bullets above.)

3. Now you are ready to write the body of your thesis.
   Body paragraphs of the thesis (usually three to five paragraphs):
   In each of the following paragraphs, give details on one of the key ideas chosen from above.
   Use your lines of evidence from your aha connections pages to support your thinking.
   (Hint: There is no need to reinvent the wheel; use your own words from the aha connections pages in your interactive notebook.)

4. You are almost there—time to wrap it up.
   Final paragraph—conclusion:
   - Restate your purpose from the thesis statement.
   - Give your thesis the "Hollywood" wrap up.
   - Leave a final impression on the reader.
How to Write a Self-Reflection

You will be expected to write a reflective essay at the end of each unit that shows your in-depth understanding about the work you are doing. Be honest and open in sharing your thoughts and opinions.

**Step 1:** Count the number of the assignments we have completed for this unit, and record it at the top of your reflection.

**Step 2:** Choose four pages from this unit that best supported the Big Aha in your unit thesis, two from the left side and two from the right side, and list them on your reflection below the assignment count.

**Step 3:** You will now be writing three paragraphs.

- **Paragraph 1:** Write specific reasons for why you chose the four assignments that you listed.

- **Paragraph 2:** Explain why these pages best support your unit thesis. Give specific examples.

- **Paragraph 3:** What do these assignments reflect about your skills as a student? For example, you may write that they show that I am organized, I am good at analyzing, I was very thorough, creative, my information was very accurate, I made connections from one assignment to another, and so on. Make sure that you cite specific examples from the pages you listed.

**Step 4:** This will be Paragraph 4. In this paragraph, you will rate your own notebook. Use the rubric to rate your work as a 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, or 5. How do you think your notebook measures up and why? Use specifics from the rubric, and relate it directly to the pages you listed. (Use examples.)

**Step 5:** This will be Paragraph 5, the last paragraph of your reflection. Hurray! Answer the following questions:

- What information did you learn that was new to you? Give specific examples.
- How did your notebook help you in this unit? Again, be specific.
- How could you improve your notebook? Please explain.

Please type your final draft, and tape it as a flip page in your interactive notebook as specified by your teacher.
Constructing the Aha Connections Pages

The Aha Connections pages are located at the beginning of each new unit in your Interactive Notebook.

**First**
Two side-by-side pages

**Second**
In the center, or close to it, write your problem statement or big idea.

**Third**
After each class activity, you will be asked to write a statement that conveys the concept learned.

For example: “Today we learned that you can never obtain an exact value, but you can get very close. Scientists call this ‘best value.’”

**Fourth**
- Take time to share out with a partner!
- Notice trends or connections!
- Use arrows or color to show those trends or connections visually!
  “Did this lab connect to the Big Aha problem, to another lab, or both?”

**Last**
Use these statements as evidence and stems to later write your aha thesis.
Aha Connections Visual Outline

TRIGGER

BIG PROBLEM

Compilation of Evidence

Line of Evidence
- Investigation
  - Experiments
  - Demonstrations
  - Observations

Line of Evidence
- Experts
  - Interview with subject matter experts

Line of Evidence
- Other
  - Other lines of evidence

Line of Evidence
- Research
  - Text books
  - Articles
  - Web sites

Line of Evidence
- Visuals
  - Tables and graphs
  - Graphic organizers
  - Simulations

Line of Evidence
- Resources
  - Educational videos
  - Podcasts
  - Blogs and wikis

BIG AHA THESIS
Facilitated Learning

Procedures

Hypotheses

Key Questions

Key Words

Data

Labs

Higher-Level Thinking

Metacognition

Making Connections

Brainstorming Diagrams

Applying What I Know

Student Questions

Graphing

Summary/Conclusions

The Thinking Processes

Input (Right Side)

(You) (Student)

Output (Left Side)
Table of Contents for Your Interactive Notebook

Name ___________________________ Unit Title ___________________________

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Total Number of Assignments Completed in this Unit ________

Reproducible 9