“Thesis Throw-down” Instructions

2. Give students a prompt in class as a warm up. Students are to write a 1-2 sentence thesis that answers the question.
3. After students have completed the thesis, with the person next to them, swap theses and evaluate using the following “Success Criteria”.
   a. Success Criteria (how should students evaluate their partner’s thesis):
      i. “The thesis previews the major points that will be made in the body paragraphs.”
         1. This should lay out the topics/themes that will be addressed in the body paragraphs.
      ii. “The thesis uses specific information (it’s not vague...does it include key terms and/or Themes).”
         1. You want help students differentiate their essay (don’t want the....America changed socially, politically, and economically)
      iii. “You can figure out what the essay prompt must be by reading the thesis (uses key language from question).”
         1. Certainly don’t want students to simply restate the prompt into a statement, but do want to use key language (e.g. “America,” “Self-Government,” and/or “Britain”)
      iv. “The thesis answers ALL parts of the essay prompt utilizing an ‘ALTHOUGH statement’.”
         1. The “Although Statement” is one where students utilize a subordinate conjunction (e.g. however, even though, despite, etc.) to convey complexity/nuance of your argument.
      v. “The thesis takes a stance (not a “100% influence by ‘ideas of self-government’”...nor “0%”...nor 50%”)
         1. 100% means that the student’s thesis only acknowledges that “ideas of self-government” influenced colonial reaction to British policies
         2. 0% means that “ideas of self-government” had NO influence what so ever
         3. 50% means that it somewhat was influenced (that is the fence-sitter...got to pick a side).
      vi. “The thesis demonstrates cause(s) / effect(s)”
         1. This is particular to this type of essay prompt, but could be customized depending on the prompt type (e.g. Change/Continuity Over Time).

4. After students have written their peer feedback, they would talk through their comments with the other students and decide which of the 2 theses best addresses the prompt.
5. Then, with the table of 4, the 2 theses that remain will be paired up against one another to determine the best thesis at that table of 4. Then compare with the group of 4 next of them to follow the cycle until one thesis (or perhaps a pair of theses) remain. This could be adapted to the top 4 in class, and then a mini-gallery walk could be used where students vote for their favorite thesis and explain why that is the case.
Prompt:

Write your thesis here:

Peer Feedback:

- The thesis previews major points that will be made in the body paragraphs.  
  Comments:

- The thesis uses specific information (not vague, includes specific IDs or themes).  
  Comments:

- You can figure out what the essay prompt must be by reading the thesis (uses key prompt language).  
  Comments:

- The thesis answers ALL parts of the essay utilizing an "although" statement.  
  Comments:

- The thesis takes a stance in regard to the prompt.  
  Comments:

- The thesis demonstrates cause(s)/effect(s).  
  Comments: