

## **To have a strong thesis, you gotta have SASS!**

A solid thesis statement has a clearly identifiable SUBJECT, ACTION, STAKES, and SCOPE. Below, I've listed some questions that might help craft an argument that encompasses all of those elements. No thesis statement answers all of these questions, but a clear and precise answer to one question in each category will set up a strong overall argument.

### **Subject:**

What or who are you talking about? Get as specific as you can.

### **Action:**

What is the subject DOING?

What verb fits best with what you have observed about the subject?

What is the subject doing to the overall message of the show?

What is the subject doing within the American TV industry?

What is the subject doing with dominant cultural narratives and tropes?

What is the subject doing to or for specific groups of people or public understanding of specific groups of people, cultural practices, or ideas?

### **Stakes:**

Why does this matter?

What is the intervention that the author or text is attempting to make in the public conversation or the entertainment landscape?

What is the real or potential impact of this action, whether positive or negative? Who is impacted most?

What can this case study or show illustrate about broader trends/patterns?

### **Scope:**

What is the specific area you are going to focus on in this project? (contemporary American television? Two different series? A single episode? A specific genre? A 90-second clip?)

Where and when are you arguing the impact is taking place? (Is the intervention contained within the show itself? The genre? The audience's biases? The TV industry?)

What audience is this most relevant to?

If there is a lot of data or material, which specific pieces are you focusing on and why?

Note: Sometimes the scope is defined elsewhere in the introduction. This will depend on how much context your argument needs in order to be understood.