Writing an Essay
A Good Thesis...

- Clear
- Arguable
- Provable
- Specific
The reason that the French Revolution was important is because it was the event that basically changed the European political landscape from a monarch with absolute authority, which was given to him by God, to a limited and completely different idea of how government was actually formed, through social contract.
The reason that the French Revolution was important is because it was the event that basically changed the European political landscape from a monarch with absolute authority, which was given to him by God, to a limited and completely different idea of how government was actually formed, through social contract.

After the French Revolution, no monarch in Europe could argue that their power came from God.

Monarchs were limited by the consent of the governed.

Don’t beat around the bush or try and sound smart. Just get to the point.
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“Politics and religion in Ancient Egypt had a connection to each other.”

“What kind of changes?

“Political change was influenced by religious ideas as well as change.”

The political nature of Ancient Egypt was strongly influenced by the religious ramifications of certain changes that occurred throughout.
“Politics and religion in Ancient Egypt had a connection to each other.”

“Political change was influenced by religious ideas as well as change.”

“Religious turmoil resulted in the decline of the 2nd, 5th and 18th dynasties of Egypt.”

“Political turmoil was the cause of the transformation from polytheism to monotheism.”

The political nature of Ancient Egypt was strongly influenced by the religious ramifications of certain changes that occurred throughout.

Don’t beat around the bush or try and sound smart. Just get to the point.
Arguable

If it is not controversial then there is no point in writing it.

The Romans built a large Empire.

After Charlemagne, Europe entered into feudalism.

The Catholic Church transformed from a religious institution to a political institution by connecting with strong medieval kings and then capitalizing on the political fragmentation of Medieval feudalism.

The papacy was very influential in Medieval Europe.

So what?

And...?

(Make Clear Point)
The Romans built a large Empire.

After Charlemagne, Europe entered into feudalism.

The Catholic Church transformed from a religious institution to a political institution by connecting with strong medieval kings and then capitalizing on the political fragmentation of Medieval feudalism.

Main point to prove throughout

1st Sub-point; must connect to main point

2nd Sub-point; must connect to main point

If it is not controversial then there is no point in writing it.
Provable

Don’t just present an argument, prove your position is correct.

Africa will never be more altered than it was when Europe began trading for slaves.

If Europe had not explored Africa then the African slave trade would never have existed.

Can not prove “What if”

Europeans treated the Africans as sub-human and unworthy of basic rights.

Too vague to prove. All of the people?
Provable

Don’t just present an argument, prove your position is correct.

The plantation economy mixed with the existing slave trade in Africa created the damaging columbian trade.

...which eventually led to racism to justify the inequality of life.

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Can not prove “What if”

Too vague to prove. All of the people?
Provable

Don’t just present an argument, prove your position is correct.

There will never be a revolution as dramatic as the French Revolution.

If the revolutionaries would not have executed Louis, then the revolution would have ended in 1792.

Can not prove “What if”

The people of France in 1789 demanded a new constitution built on enlightenment ideas.

Too vague to prove. All of the people?
Provable

Don’t just present an argument, prove your position is correct.

Louis execution was a symbol that tradition was no longer an accepted way of life, and the Revolution, sparked by the enlightenment rationality, became radical.

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Can not prove “What if”

The people of France in 1789 demanded a new constitution built on enlightenment ideas.

Too vague to prove. All of the people?
Provable

Don’t just present an argument, prove your position is correct.

Europe will never be as politically united as it was under the Roman Empire.

If Charles Martel had lost the Battle of Tours, Europe would have become Islamic and the Catholic Church would not have been as powerful.

Can not prove

“What if”

Christendom was a result of the political ambitions of Popes.

Too vague to prove.

All the Popes?
Provable

Don’t just present an argument, prove your position is correct.

Martel’s victory at the Battle of Tours coupled with the political fragmentation of Western Europe during feudalism, opened the door for ambitious Popes to grab political influence.

Europe will never be as politically united as it was under the Roman Empire.

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Can not prove

“What if”

Christendom was a result of the political ambitions of Popes.

Too vague to prove.

All the Popes?
Isaac Newton’s work was the culmination of centuries of work that led to a new view of the world. During the Scientific Revolution, the worldview of Europe began to transform. Are you going to talk about all of the ideas that helped Newton in one paper?
Newton built his ideas on Kepler, Galileo, and others and created an idea of a mechanical universe. Isaac Newton’s work was the culmination of centuries of work that led to a new view of the world.

During the Scientific Revolution, the worldview of Europe began to transform.

Do not be vague.

Are you going to talk about all of the ideas that helped Newton in one paper?

Better, but can it be more specific?
Newton built his ideas on Kepler, Galileo, and others and created an idea of a mechanical universe which was a necessary component of the industrial revolution of the late 18th century and the religious idea of Deism.

Isaac Newton’s work was the culmination of centuries of work that led to a new view of the world. Newton’s laws of motion presented a mechanical universe which was a necessary component of the industrial revolution of the late 18th century and the religious idea of Deism.

During the Scientific Revolution, the worldview of Europe began to transform. Are you going to talk about all of the ideas that helped Newton in one paper? Better, but can it be more specific?
The political nature of Ancient Egypt was strongly influenced by the religious ramifications of certain changes that occurred throughout.

“Politics and religion in Ancient Egypt had a connection to each other.”

“Religious turmoil resulted in the decline of the 2nd, 5th and 18th dynasties of Egypt.”

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The political nature of Ancient Egypt was strongly influenced by the religious ramifications of certain changes that occurred throughout.
Statements in an Essay

- Opinions
  - My point
  - Clarification of relevance

- Explanations/Analysis

- Facts
  - Undisputed history
The Scientific Revolution was a dramatic and sudden paradigm shift in the way that science was done.

Copernicus’s *De Revolutionibus* contradicted the established Ptolemaic view of the universe.

There was no such thing as the scientific revolution; the period from Copernicus to Isaac Newton was a gradual transition that began long before Copernicus.

The Scientific Revolution was a dramatic and sudden paradigm shift in the way that science was done.

Galileo died in 1542.

Not questioned by historians.

Not undisputed
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Because you are contradicting an established idea, it is not “undisputed” and therefore, is an opinion not a fact.

Not questioned by historians.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Undisputed History</th>
<th>Facts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not questioned by historians.</td>
<td>Charlemagne died in 814.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Not undisputed</strong>&lt;br&gt;The idea of “feudalism” is far too simplistic to be considered the socio-political structure of the middle ages.</td>
<td>Ankhaton changed Egyptian religion to a monotheistic one that worshiped Aton.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because you are contradicting an established idea, it is not “undisputed” and therefore, is an opinion not a fact.</td>
<td>Feudalism was the socio-economic and political system of the middle ages.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Feudalism was a result of Charlemagne’s governmental structure being left to the hands of weak leaders.

Because religion and political influence was so intertwined in Ancient Egypt, major religious changes were often more of a result of political struggles.

Because Louis the Pious was more concerned with religious practices than retaining the strength of the central government, after Charlemagne’s death in 814 the nobility began to exercise their own political influence and created local independent governments.

The growing political influence of the priests of Amun perhaps motivated Anhkaton to transition Egypt to the monotheistic worship of Aton.

Opinion
An idea that is not well established but one which the writer wishes to become accepted.

Explanation/Analysis
Showing how the factual evidence is related to, and proves the thesis/opinion(s).
Making strong sentences

**Passive Voice**

The spread of Islam into Western Europe was stopped in 732.

**Active Voice**

In 732, Charles Martel and the Franks stopped the spread of Islam into Western Europe.

The spread of Islam into Western Europe was stopped in 732 by Charles Martel and the Franks.
Making strong sentences

Passive Voice

The spread of Islam into Western Europe was stopped in 732.

By whom?

The spread of Islam into Western Europe was stopped in 732 by Charles Martel and the Franks.

Active Voice

In 732, Charles Martel and the Franks stopped the spread of Islam into Western Europe.

Who is doing the action?
The reason that the Frankish empire began to collapse was because the leaders, like Charlemagne and Clovis, became weak like Louis the Pious and so feudalism began.
Making strong sentences

Awkward and Confusing

The reason that the Frankish empire began to collapse was because the leaders, like Charlemagne and Clovis, became weak like Louis the Pious and so feudalism began.

Strong leadership personalities, like Clovis and Charlemagne, held the fragile structure of the Frankish empire together.

Feudalism resulted from local nobles becoming more politically independent at the expense of weak leaders such as Louis the Pious.
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epitomizes.

Alexander VI represents the moral corruption of the renaissance papacy.
The reason that religion was so important was because there was a connection between religion and the Political structure of the medieval world.

In the medieval world, politics and religion were connected.
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In the medieval world, politics and religion were connected intertwined.
Making strong sentences

Specificity

The reason that Alexander VI is important is because he represents the moral corruption of the papacy that was prevalent during the renaissance.

Alexander VI epitomizes the moral corruption of the renaissance papacy.

Political ambitions drove Alexander VI to compromise morality.
Making strong sentences

Specificity

The reason that Alexander VI is important is because he represents the moral corruption of the papacy that was prevalent during the renaissance.

Alexander VI epitomizes the moral corruption of the renaissance papacy.

Be specific

Political ambitions drove Alexander VI to compromise morality.

What compromises
Making strong sentences

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What compromises drove Alexander VI to compromise morality.

Political ambitions drove Alexander VI to use his daughter as a political pawn.

Alexander’s desire to make the Borgia family prosper over the powerful Italian families drove him to use his daughter as a political pawn.

Be specific

Specificity
Making strong sentences

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The reason that Alexander VI is important is because he represents the moral corruption of the papacy that was prevalent during the renaissance.

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What compromises

Alexander’s desire to make the Borgia family prosper over the powerful Italian families drove him to use his daughter as a political pawn.

Alexander VI epitomizes the moral corruption of the renaissance papacy.
Making strong sentences

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The reason that religion was so important was because there was a connection between religion and the political structure of the medieval world.

In the medieval world politics and religion were connected intertwined.

Political ambitions drove the church to accept various doctrines.
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In the medieval world, politics and religion were connected and intertwined.

Political ambitions drove the church to accept various doctrines.

Be specific

Which doctrines?
Making strong sentences

Specificity

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Leo IX’s desire to remove hereditary succession of church positions drove the Church to ban marriage for all clergy.
Making strong sentences

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Making strong sentences

What do you want to emphasize?

Edward’s support was rooted in the acknowledgement of national allegiance rather than the support of a local lord.

The people of England began to support Edward I instead of supporting local lords.

Edward I gained support by promoting the national consciousness at the expense of feudal loyalty.