"Thesis Statement" Questions

My intent in providing you with the following questions is to assist those students who are having difficulty formulating their own thesis statements. By answering the following questions, you should be able to generate a subjective statement that you can support in the body paragraphs of your essay.

"The Jumping Frog of Calaveras County":
Is Simon Wheeler really serious when relating the story of Jim Smiley? The easterner clearly thinks Simon is serious. Do you agree or disagree?

While most regional conflicts of 1865 would have emphasized the North and the South, Twain chooses instead to focus on the regional differences between the East and the West. In presenting this conflict, how does Twain want the reader to view this contrast in cultures?

"The War Prayer":
Twain realized that his satire of American churchgoers was so scathing that his sketch would never be published during his lifetime. In general, while using specific examples from the text, what criticism does Twain have of the jingoistic Christians? (Again, I want a general observation, not a specific complaint.)

"Editha":
Who is more responsible (and the point of this thesis is to take a side) for George's death, Editha or George?

How is Howells' text a criticism of late 19th century sentimentalism?

"Daisy Miller: A Study":
The dominant question for most readers regarding James' text is this: Is Daisy as innocent as she appears and Winterbourne originally thinks?

What implications is the reader supposed to draw from the Old World/New World dichotomy emphasized in the story?