

THESIS STATEMENTS

Thesis Statement

It informs the reader of the **main idea** of your paper. It **guides** your paper and **persuades** the reader about your point of view on a topic.

A **strong thesis** statement is an informed opinion, stance, or position on the topic you wish to discuss, not simply an announcement of the topic to the reader.

Do not use terms like “I’m going to write about...” or “This paper is about. . .” Don’t use terms such as, “I feel,” “I believe,” or “I think.” A thesis **should never be a fragment or a question**. Also, quotes are not usually used in a thesis statement.

Before you begin writing your thesis statement:

- What will you **argue** or **prove**? Next, you can begin your research on the topic.
- Research to find credible sources before forming your thesis statement.
- After your research, do some **brainstorming** to come up with ideas for your essay. Some methods include, clustering, free writing, and listing.
- Next, write a *working thesis*. Remember, **your thesis may change as you write your paper**.
- A thesis statement could be a single sentence at the end of the introductory paragraph. However, in a longer paper, your thesis may be located further down. Make sure it is not so far into your paper that it gets lost, and the reader does not recognize it as a thesis.

Writing thesis statements:

Expository Paper	This will explain something to the audience.
Analytical Paper	This will break down an issue or idea into its component parts, evaluate the issue or idea, and present this breakdown and evaluation to the reader.
Argumentative Paper	This will make a claim about a topic and justify it with specific evidence to convince the reader that the claim is true. Your claim can be an opinion, a policy proposal, an evaluation, a cause-and-effect statement, or an interpretation.

Note: When writing a paper that does not fall under the above categories, such as a **narrative**, putting a thesis statement in your **first paragraph** will help the reader understand the **focus** of your paper.

Strong Thesis Checklist:

1. Have you **answered** the prompt (question) assigned by your instructor? Yes No

2. Have you asked yourself, “**So what?**” Yes No
If your answer is, “**No one would care but me,**” it is **not** a strong thesis.

3. Is your thesis a **statement of fact**? Yes No
It should **not** be. Your thesis statement should take a position that someone can oppose. If it is a statement with which everyone can agree, **you are not making an argument.**

4. Is your thesis **specific**? Yes No
A vague thesis is one that **does not** include a strong argument.

5. Does your thesis **fit** with the information in your body paragraphs? Yes No
If your body paragraphs do not fit your thesis, you will have to **change your thesis**. It is not unusual that as you begin with a **working thesis**, you may have to change it after completing your essay.