
Thesis Statements

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What is a thesis statement? A thesis statement is a sentence or two that introduces your argument or analysis.

Why should your essay contain a thesis statement?

- To condense your argument
- To test ideas by clarifying them into a sentence or two
- To better organize your argument
- To give your reader a “guide” to your argument

Determine the type of paper you are writing:

An **analytical** paper breaks down an issue or an idea into its component parts, evaluates the issue or idea, and presents this breakdown and evaluation to the audience.

An **expository** (explanatory) paper explains something to the audience.

An **argumentative** paper makes a claim about a topic and justifies this claim with specific evidence. The claim could be an opinion, a policy proposal, an evaluation, a cause-and-effect statement, or an interpretation. The goal of the argumentative paper is to convince the audience that the claim is true based on the evidence provided.

How to write a strong thesis statement:

- Almost all assignments can be broken down to answer a single question. Your first step is to condense the assignment into a specific question.
- Even if your assignment does not ask a question, you will still need to answer a question about the issue you would like to explore
- Choose a subject that people could disagree on.
- Express one main idea. The thesis statement should be specific. Only discuss what will be covered in your paper and supported with evidence.
- Provide your own conclusions about the topic.

Strong vs. Weak Thesis Statements:

A strong thesis makes a claim.

The thesis should clearly convey your position on a subject. For example, if you are writing a paper for a health class, you might be asked to choose a popular weight-loss product to evaluate. Here are two thesis statements:

Weak: There are some negative and positive aspects to the Strawberry Herb Tea Supplement.

*This is a *weak* thesis statement because it does not take a stand. The phrase *negative and positive aspects* is vague.

Strong: Because Strawberry Herb Tea Supplement promotes fast weight loss that results in the loss of muscle and lean body mass, it creates a potential risk to customers.

*This is a *strong* thesis because it takes a stand, and because it is specific.

A strong thesis states one main idea.

If the paper has more than one main idea the reader might be confused about the paper’s subject.

Weak: Companies should maximize the marketing potential of the Internet, and Facebook pages can provide both advertising and customer support.

*This is a *weak* thesis statement because the reader can’t decide whether the paper is about marketing on the Internet or Facebook pages.

Strong: Because the Internet is filled with an abundance of marketing potential, companies should exploit this potential by using Facebook pages that offer both advertising and customer support.

*This is a *strong* thesis because the two ideas are related to each other to make one main idea.



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