

Thesis Statement

What is it and How can I create one??

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What is a thesis statement?

Composition classes stress the role of the thesis statement because it is the backbone of collegiate composition. The thesis statement gives the reader insight into the topic, letting him/her know what the essay is about. Without a thesis statement, the essay may lack an argument, focus, clarity, and continuity.

1. There are two major types of thesis statements: explanatory and argumentative. The explanatory thesis announces the subject to the reader; it never declares a stance which needs an argument to defend. These explanatory theses are evident in expository essays and research essays. In an argumentative essay, the thesis statement should be a claim, not a factual statement or a personal response to a topic. It should be an idea that provokes opposition, a claim that readers might choose to refute.
2. The thesis statement is usually found at the end of an introductory paragraph. It's planted early in the essay because it informs the reader of the main important idea that encompasses the entire essay.
3. A thesis statement is not always one sentence; the length of the thesis depends on the depth of the essay. Some essays may require more than a single sentence. However, the statement should be as clear and concise as possible in the final draft of the essay. The shorter and more direct a thesis statement is the more confident and assertive the writer sounds. Being assertive and confident is crucial, especially in argumentative essays.

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Creating a thesis statement:

As a writer, keep your thesis statement in mind. Each proposed or considered topic within the essay should have some relevance to your thesis statement. It is the argument or focus of the essay, as well as a great structuring tool.

Because of the pivotal role a thesis statement plays in a piece of composition, many novice writers put too much emphasis on the thesis statement during the production of an essay. It is important to keep the thesis in mind, but it is also important to avoid hindering the writing process by restricting your writing to a thesis statement. This is where a **working thesis** comes into play.

A working thesis is exactly what it means: a thesis statement that is “in progress” during the writing process. Normally, a thesis statement will not be fully constructed until the entire essay is written. A working thesis allows for a writer to approach the topic with a thesis in mind, even though that thesis can be revised (and it will be numerous times) during the writing process.

Constructing a working thesis should come after brainstorming or deriving a topic. It should be a thesis that can help guide you as a writer through the composition of the essay. A simple way to begin the construction of a working thesis is to write "I believe that ... " and follow it up with a simple claim that includes the key topics to be discussed in the essay. An example would be:

“I believe that America’s cultural identity can be defined by art, literature, and film.”

The working thesis stated above now gives the writer a structure for the paper. Three main ideas should be discussed in their relation to cultural identity: art, literature, and film.

The best aspect of a working thesis is that it can be revised at any time to meet the needs of the essay or the writer. For instance, when using a working thesis, the writer knows that the thesis can be changed to fit in an extra topic if the essay needs it:

*“I believe that America’s cultural identity can be defined by art, literature, **music**, and film.”*

The role of the working thesis is to lessen the stress of writing a collegiate essay and to incorporate some flexibility into the writing process. Knowing that a working thesis will be subjected to numerous revisions allows the writer more freedom when writing the essay.