Thesis Statements

Write Site handout

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.

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

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

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.

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

*This is a strong thesis because the two ideas are related to each other to make one main idea.
USE STYLES TO EASILY FORMAT YOUR WORD DOCUMENTS IN NO TIME.

Subtitle

HEADING 3

STREET ADDRESS, CITY, ST ZIP CODE

Telephone

Subtitle

HEADING 8

STREET ADDRESS, CITY, ST ZIP CODE

Telephone
USE STYLES TO EASILY FORMAT YOUR WORD DOCUMENTS IN NO TIME.

ON THE HOME TAB OF THE RIBBON, CHECK OUT STYLES

FIND EVEN MORE EASY-TO-USE TOOLS ON THE INSERT TAB