

Thesis Statements

Argument Writing

Preparing to Write a Thesis Statement

Before creating a thesis statement you must...

1. Begin with a topic question.
 - a. Should the driving age be raised?
2. Research the topic.
 - a. Be sure to approach the evidence fairly and without bias.
 - b. Consider both sides of the issue.
3. Form your opinion and state it clearly.
 - a. No, the driving age should stay the same.

Now you're ready to write your thesis statement!

What is a Thesis?

- A thesis statement presents your opinions or thoughts on a subject or an issue.
- **You cannot write an effective essay without one.**
- It must contain the subject of your argument and your opinion.
- Your thesis should answers the topic question (the one you identified previously).
 - Make your claim clear to readers!

TIP: A thesis statement should never contain the following: *in my opinion, I think, I believe*, etc. Your thesis statement is what you believe; it is implied and does not need to be stated. If it help to start your thesis with these phrases, you may do so, but you should omit it from your final thesis.

Characteristics of a Good Thesis

Short and Sweet

A good thesis statement is short and simple: it should be no longer than one sentence, regardless of essay length.

- Good Example: Success is a result of doing the right things consistently.
- Bad Example: In a world full of success gurus and books about success, it becomes ever so more important to delineate the one trait that ultimately determines success: doing the right things consistently.

Singular

A good thesis statement is limited to one main idea.

- Good Example: The key to successful dieting is focusing on a specific goal.
- Bad Example: The key to successful dieting is focusing on a specific goal, which is also the key to successfully running a business and coaching a football team.

Self-Assured

A good thesis statement is a declarative sentence with no qualifiers (might, maybe, perhaps, etc.):

- Good Example: LeBron James' ability to score, pass, and rebound make him the league's most valuable player.
- Bad Example: Does LeBron James' ability to score, pass, and rebound make him the league's most valuable player?
- Bad Example: LeBron James' ability to score, pass, and rebound just might make him the league's most valuable player.

Evaluating Your Thesis Statement

The following
examples are based on
this question:

*Do Demetrius's prior
feelings for Hermia
diminish the credibility
of his love for Helena?*



Evaluating Your Thesis Statement

1. Demetrius's prior feelings for Hermia diminish the credibility of his love for Helena.
2. This essay examines whether or not Demetrius's prior feelings for Hermia diminish his love for Helena. While Demetrius loved Helena with all his heart, he loved Hermia too. It could be argued they were both his favorite just like Bottom and Oberon were both romantically involved with Titania.

Ask yourself:

- Is it short and sweet? Is it to the point?
- Is it singular? Does it address one specific topic?
- Is it self-assured? Does it confidently answer the question?

Practice

Write a thesis statement in response to the following prompt on a separate sheet of paper.

Can graffiti be considered art?

Do not include your name on the paper.

Your Thesis Statement

Now it's time to write your own thesis statement.

On your paper, you should have the following items:

1. Your topic question
2. Both sides of the argument
3. A clearly stated opinion on the topic
4. Your thesis statement
 - a. It is more than okay to have multiple drafts!
 - b. If you are having trouble deciding... that's what I'm here for!

Your thesis statement must be approved by me by the end of the class period or at the start of class tomorrow.