

THESIS STATEMENTS

WHAT IS A THESIS STATEMENT?

A **thesis statement** is a direct, concise statement of your paper's major focus or argument. Your thesis statement is the central message that states your position on a topic. A strong thesis takes a stand, generates discussion, and expresses one main idea about a topic; in other words, it details the conclusion(s) you reached about your position or the topic.

For more information on thesis statements and additional strategies to use while constructing a thesis statement, see our workshop on thesis statements.

FUNCTION OF A THESIS STATEMENT

A thesis statement aids your reader in following and identifying the scope, purpose, and direction of your paper. A thesis statement allows you to narrow the scope of your writing to a specific question that can be answered within the assignment parameters for your essay. It has the added benefit of helping you start organizing your paper, focusing your writing, and preventing you from wandering from the topic.

Working thesis statement

Creating a working thesis statement after conducting your initial research can help you start your draft(s). Because it articulates the central idea or argument of your paper, you can identify what other points you want to make to discuss or support it.

As you draft your essay, keep checking to make sure there is a clear relationship from the points in your paragraphs to the main idea or argument in the working thesis statement. You can always revise the thesis statement if your paper begins to take a new or better direction.

QUESTIONS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN WRITING A THESIS STATEMENT

Consider the following questions while developing your tentative thesis statement:

- What is your claim?
- Is your position on your topic debatable?
- Can you provide sufficient evidence for your thesis statement in the given page limit? (Is your thesis narrow and focused)?
- Does your thesis statement tell readers what's coming in the body of your essay?
- Does your thesis statement keep you (and your readers) on track?

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STEPS TO DEVELOP A THESIS STATEMENT

1. Write a sentence that summarizes your goal for writing your paper. You could start with a template like the ones here or create a research question you have about a topic.
 - I want my readers to better understand how/what . . .
 - I want to convince my reader that . . .
 - I want to analyze X in Y. . .
2. Consider what your main argument is and the main points you want to make. Conduct some preliminary research and formulate a tentative answer(s) to your question.
3. Continue to research your topic and identify the main points you want to cover and the position you want to support. (Outline, bubble map, color code, etc. your ideas to keep you organized).
4. Once you've narrowed your claims, begin to draft your thesis statement that answers your research question, states your topic and position, and lists your reason(s). Do not restate your research question, topic, or prompt; instead, incorporate your interpretation and stance of the question, topic, or prompt.
5. Continue researching your topic as you draft your paper, using the evidence you find to support your position.
6. Write your paper following your tentative thesis. As you learn more about your topic, you can revise your thesis to include your newly developed ideas and the conclusion(s) you reach in your paper.

Example of a writer using these steps

1. Create a research question/state your goal: How does the installation of solar panels in the desert affect the area's ecology? / I want my readers to understand how solar panels might affect desert ecology.

2. Formulate some answers:

- | | | |
|---|--|----------------------------------|
| - Need to be installed in large areas to be effective | - Large solar panels are energetically inefficient | - Disruptive to animal migration |
| - Installation is expensive! | - Desert flora are slow growing | - Destruction of public lands |
| - Biocrust gets destroyed | | |

3. Identify your main points:

- I want to explore how the panel installation process is destructive to desert ecosystems.
- I will argue that desert flora and biocrust are ecologically instrumental to the desert.
- I will explain how these plants cannot simply grow back after being uprooted.
- I will describe alternative solutions to installing solar panels in the desert.

4. Draft a thesis statement:

The installation of solar panels in the desert is not a viable renewable energy solution as it unnecessarily destroys the biocrust and flora that are instrumental in maintaining the ecosystem.