



Thesis Checklist

- ⇒ Does the thesis summarize the main points of your paper?
- ⇒ Is the thesis clear and concise?
- ⇒ Is the thesis unique to your paper? Is the thesis your own creation?
- ⇒ Does your thesis reach a specific audience? Make sure to ask yourself who you are trying to reach.
- ⇒ Does your thesis answer the “so what?” question?
- ⇒ Does the thesis explain “how” or “why”?
- ⇒ Is your thesis more than just an opinionated statement?
- ⇒ Have you revised your thesis as your paper changes and develops?
- ⇒ Does your thesis do more than just restate the subject?
- ⇒ Is this thesis debatable? Can someone else have a differing opinion?
- ⇒ Does your thesis avoid vague language?

Works Cited

“Thesis Statements.” OWL: Roane State Community College. 5 June 1995. Web. 21 Jan. 2014.

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Thesis Statements



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What is a thesis statement?

A thesis statement lets the reader know what the paper will be about. It is usually one to two sentences that clearly answer the following questions for the reader:

- **So what?**
Examines what is important or problematic about the topic.
- **How?**
OR
- **Why?**
If you are going to examine the significance of something, you want to demonstrate how or why you will do this in the thesis.

A strong thesis should...

- Introduce the writer's perspective on the topic, without using personal conviction as the basis.
- Be an interpretation of the subject.
- Make a claim that is debatable. This claim should not be too broad, but instead can be supported by specific examples throughout the paper.
- Summarize the main points the writer will make in the paper.
- Encourage the audience to continue reading.
- Avoid vague language such as "good," "bad," "better," "worse," or "nice."

The thesis statement is NOT...

- **An Announcement**
e.g., In this paper I will compare the differences between Machiavelli's *The Prince* and Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*.

The above example tells the reader what will be included in the paper. However, the thesis should include **what** you plan on proving and **how/why** you will do so.
- **A Question**
e.g., Why is the Civil War a pivotal moment in the history of the United States?

While questions will get the reader thinking, they do not establish a claim. **Hint:** Instead of using the question as the thesis, consider using the **answer** to that question.
- **A Quote**
e.g., Martin Luther King Jr. said, "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

A thesis statement should not be a quote from an outside source, but should be written by the author of the paper.
- **A Statement of Fact**
e.g., Obesity is a growing epidemic in the United States.

The above statement contains nothing that can be discussed or debated. A thesis should contain a "so what" or point that the writer wants to make about the topic.

When writing your thesis...

Figure out what type of writing it is.

- **Analysis**
Breaks down ideas and closely examines them for the reader.
- **Expository**
Explains a concept or idea to the reader.
- **Argument**
Makes a claim and supports this claim throughout the paper.

How does the thesis help the writer?

- Gives a clear organizational strategy for the rest of the paper.
- Assists in the development of topic sentences for each paragraph.
- Keeps the paper focused and on topic
Hint: You may want to highlight your thesis and refer back to it periodically as you write.

How does the thesis help the reader?

- Prepares the reader for what to expect in the rest of the paper.
- Summarizes the scope, purpose, and direction of the paper.
- Allows him/her to relate to the ideas in the paper and establish a connection

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