The Thesis Statement
The thesis is the core idea (topic, focus) of the paper. It serves as the paper’s purpose, or the reason for writing about a given subject.

Like the basic foundation is the starting point for building a strong house, so is the thesis statement the starting point for building a solid essay or research paper.

Thesis Statement (also called a thesis sentence or simply, the thesis):
1. concisely expresses the main idea
2. is proved and supported by the body of the essay
3. should do more than state a fact; rather, it should make a significant statement and/or argument based on your own ideas.

Avoid writing the thesis statement as broad and general because the thesis should be clear and specific and list key points (upon which the body of the paper will be constructed).

How to Develop a Thesis Statement:
- Think beyond the superficial layer of introducing a basic idea. After writing a thesis statement, ask yourself, “Why should the reader care?”

- Go deeper with your main idea than merely writing. Consider adding a reason by using the word because.
  
  Example: The Battle of Fort Donelson was important.” (because?)
  
  Revision: The Battle of Fort Donelson was strategically important because the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers were formed as current modes of transportation.

More Examples:
- Broad and general: Parents should raise their children to be good citizens.
- Better: Parents should raise their children to be solid citizens who build productive lives and contribute to their communities.
**Broad and general:** The legal drinking age should be raised to eighteen years of age.

**Better:** The legal drinking age should be raised to eighteen years of age because those who are eighteen are responsible enough to vote and serve in the military; therefore, they should be allowed to legally drink alcohol.

**Broad and general:** Edgar Allen Poe’s poem “The Raven” is interesting.

**Better:** Edgar Allen Poe’s poem “The Raven” is interesting because of his use of imagery, intrigue, and tone.

**Tip:**
Some instructors teach the thesis is written as the first sentence of the entire paper while others say it belongs at the end of the opening paragraph. Follow the instructors’ requirements. **Regardless,** the thesis sentence must be present and clearly stated. Without it, the rest of the paper will lack focus, foundation, and structure.