

APSU Writing Center

Thesis Statement

The Thesis Statement

A **thesis statement** is typically a single sentence that serves as the foundation of your academic writing. It presents the main argument to your reader and justifies the necessity of your paper.

A Thesis *Should*:

- Summarize the main point or claim of an essay or research paper
- Clearly indicate what the paper will discuss and the author's stance
- Concisely express the main idea of the paper
- Justify the discussion and take a clear stand or position
- Be supported and proven with evidence in the body paragraphs

A Thesis *Should Not*:

Some professors may require the thesis to pose a question or include a specific signal phrase as part of the assignment. Always consult your assignment sheet.

- Ask a question instead of making a claim
- Simply state a fact
- Include abbreviations or overly generic language
- Use vague or introductory phrases such as:
 - "This paper will discuss..."
 - "I am going to prove that..."

Writing Tips

- Freewrite for 10 minutes about your topic to brainstorm ideas.
- Organize your ideas into main points.
- Take a stance that directly answers the assignment prompt.
- Your thesis should present ideas that require explanation or defense, giving readers a reason to keep reading.

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How to Develop a Thesis Statement

Pose a Question

- Restate the question or prompt in your own words.
 - **Example:** What are the primary causes of climate change?

Make a Claim

- Answer the question with your opinion or stance (without using “I”).
 - **Example:** Climate change is caused primarily by human activities.

Identify Your Main Points

- Write down three key reasons or pieces of evidence that support your claim. These will become your topic sentences for each body paragraph.
 - **Example 1:** The burning of fossil fuels, such as coal and oil, releases carbon pollution into the atmosphere.
 - **Example 2:** Deforestation means fewer trees exist to absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen into the air.
 - **Example 3:** Farming contributes to climate change because livestock produce methane, a greenhouse gas.

Put Your Ideas All Together

- Put your question, claims, and main points all together into a thesis statement.
 - **Example Thesis:** Climate change is caused by human activities, such as the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, and farming.
 - **Example Thesis:** The Writing Center benefits students through online resources by providing YouTube educational videos, writing handouts, and virtual appointments, which in turn support commuter students.

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Thesis Statement Practice

Thesis Writing Drafting Tips

- Use the sentence starters below to help you build a strong thesis statement.
- Fill in the blanks with your own ideas about your topic.
- Although most readers of _____ (topic or book) believe that _____ (common idea), closer examination shows that _____ (your new or different idea).
- _____ (Author) uses _____ (technique 1) and _____ (technique 2) to show that _____ (main idea or argument).
- Phenomenon X is the result of _____ (factor 1), _____ (factor 2), and _____ (factor 3).

1. Pose a question or restate the question posed by the writing prompt.

2. Make a claim or state your opinion (without using the personal pronoun “I”). Make sure to write your answer as a complete sentence, not a question or phrase.

3. Write down the main points (pieces of evidence) that you will explore in your paper. These will become topic sentences in the body of your essay.

4. Now, put it all together.

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References

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