How to Construct a Thesis for your Essay:

Step By Step Instructions
Choose a Topic that Interests You

• This must be the first step in writing your paper and your thesis statement because all direction of the paper will depend on what topic you are writing about.

• Unfortunately, you must ignore this step if the topic is decided for you.
Explore and Research your Topic!

- The goal of this step is to find a particular narrow subject in your topic which you can make an argument about.
- For example, take the topic of computers. There are many aspects of computers that can be expanded on such as hardware, software, and programming.
- However, vague topics like these do not make good theses.
- But something more narrow, such as the effects of Steve Jobs on the modern computer industry, allows for a much clearer focus.
Start with a question and then make the answer your thesis.

**STEP 1**
ASK A QUESTION: Should schools require students to wear uniforms on a daily basis?

**STEP 2**
CREATE A DECLARATION: Schools should require students to wear uniforms on a daily basis.

**STEP 3**
LIST 3 REASONS WHY:
- Students experience less peer pressure
- Uniforms cost less overall
- Promote reduction of violence in school

**STEP 4**
COMBINE AND WRITE YOUR THESIS STATEMENT:
Schools should require students to wear uniforms on a daily basis due to the fact that students will experience less peer pressure, parents will spend less money on clothing, and schools will see a reduction in violence among students.
Start with a Question -- Then Make the Answer to Your Question the Thesis. Some Examples

Question: What are the benefits of using computers in a fourth-grade classroom?
Thesis: Computers allow fourth graders an early advantage in technological and scientific education.

Question: Why is the Mississippi River so important in Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*?
Thesis: The river comes to symbolize both division and progress, as it separates our characters and country while still providing the best chance for Huck and Jim to get to know one another.

Question: Why do people seem to get angry at vegans, feminists, and other "morally righteous" subgroups?
Thesis: Through careful sociological study, it has been found that people naturally assume that "morally righteous" people look down on others, and label them as "inferior," causing anger and conflict where there generally is none.
Address a Single Issue in great Detail

**Examples**

**Thesis** = **Topic** + **Opinion** + **Why/How**

- As the rate of *teen suicide* grows, more preventative measures should be taken in order to save lives by identifying and seeking professional treatment.

- In *To Kill A Mockingbird*, Harper Lee shows that justice will never prevail if *prejudice continues to infect people*.

- The struggles of these protagonists in novels by J.D. Salinger, John Knowles, and Elie Wiesel illustrate that acceptance of the uncontrollable is necessary and that meaning comes not from things of the world but rather from within.

**THE THESIS STATEMENT**

**Example 1:**
- In the novel, “G-Dog and the Homeboys”, Spanky’s personality and emotions are revealed by his words and actions.
- The subject is Spanky. My opinion is that his personality and emotions are revealed by his words and actions.

**Example 2:**
- In the novel “G-Dog and the Homeboys”, Spanky’s childhood relationship with his mother informs his personality and emotions as a young man.
- The subject is Spanky’s relationship with his mother. My opinion is that this relationship tells us about his personality and emotions.
Tailor your Thesis to the Type of Paper you’re Writing: Analytical Essay

Examples of literary analysis thesis statements

- In Romeo and Juliet, Shakespeare uses foreshadowing to suggest that danger or a perilous situation is near.
- In the poem, “Jabberwacky” by Lewis Carroll, the author uses scary-sounding nonsense words to create an ominous yet humorous tone.
- In Number the Stars, Ellen’s Star of David necklace symbolizes Annemarie’s devotion to her friend and her stance against the Germans.

**Analytical:** Breaks down something to better examine and understand it. An analytical thesis statement should answer a "how" or "why" question, and provide evidence to support that claim.

**Sample Thesis:**

This dynamic between different generations sparks much of the play’s tension, as age becomes a motive for the violence and unrest that rocks King Lear.
Tailor your Thesis to the Type of Paper you’re Writing: Expository

Expository: Teaches or illuminates a point. An expository statement is aimed at explaining something to the audience. You don’t have to prove or analyze the subject matter – only deliver the information.

Sample Thesis:
The explosion of 1800’s philosophies like Positivism, Marxism, and Darwinism under minded and refuted Christianity to instead focus on the real, tangible world.

- Sometimes a research question has more than one focus.
- For example: What are the causes and effects of insomnia?
Tailor your Thesis to the Type of Paper you’re Writing: Argumentative

Writing Argument Essays

**THESIS STATEMENT**

Your thesis statement in an argumentative essay must be strong and to the point. Often persuasive thesis statements include the words “should,” “ought,” and “must.”

**Examples:**
- The death penalty should be abolished.
- Cigarette smoking should be banned.
- Teens who are caught texting while driving ought to have their licenses revoked.
- Tuition rates must decrease.

**Argumentative:** Makes a claim about which reasonable people can disagree. It takes a position, and asserts the writer’s stance which is logical and possible. The argumentative thesis must be focused and narrow, and be supported by evidence.

**Sample Thesis:**

Without the steady hand and specific decisions of Barack Obama, America would never have recovered from the hole it entered in the early 2000’s.
Know the type, purpose, and audience of the paper.

➢ These are usually assigned by the instructor, but even if you get to choose them, you must understand that these will affect your thesis statement considerably.

➢ If you are writing a persuasive paper, your purpose will be to *prove* something to a specific group.

➢ If you are writing a descriptive paper, your purpose will be to *describe* something to a specific group.

➢ Each of these must be expressed in your thesis somehow.

➢ Do not assume that your teacher is your audience. A good rule is to write for an imagined audience, your peers, who would otherwise not have background information about your topic.

➢ If in doubt, always ask your instructor/teacher for clarification.
Ensure your Thesis is provable, free of bias language, precise, and to the point.

City council members are ineffective and should be thrown in jail is not an argumentative thesis. City council members’ ineffectiveness is not a reason to send them to jail.

City council members should be term limited to prevent one group or party from maintaining control indefinitely is an arguable thesis because term limits are possible, and shared political control is a reasonable goal.

Individuals convicted of murder will go to hell when they die is not an argumentative thesis because its support rests on religious beliefs or values rather than evidence.

Rehabilitation programs for individuals serving life sentences should be funded because these programs reduce violence within prisons is an argumentative thesis because evidence such as case studies and statistics can be used to support it.
Your Thesis Statement: The Process and Revision

- Is an assertion that starts with a question and needs several revisions.
- It takes a stand – which includes your educated opinion and research on the topic.
- It answers a specific question in detail and is precise.
- Is debatable among peers. Meaning, a person researching the same content/field may come to a different conclusion.
Get the tone right and use verbs that convey the correct meaning

You want your thesis statement to be identifiable as a thesis statement. You do this by using verbs that are firm, precise, and definite. Consider using a synonym finder or thesaurus in order to avoid repetition.

Examples of Tone

- Cautious
- Humorous
- Affectionate
- Hostile
- Critical
- Objective
- Personal
- Violent
- Solemn / Serious
- Sarcastic
- Disapproving
- Enthusiastic
- Desperate
- Pleading
- Indifferent

Thesis Statement Verbs

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Know where to place a thesis statement in your essay

Because of the role thesis statements play, they appear at the beginning of the paper, usually at the end of the first paragraph or somewhere in the introduction.

Although most people look for the thesis at the end of the first paragraph, its location can depend on a number of factors: such as how lengthy an introduction you need before you can introduce your thesis or the length of your paper.

Please contact your instructor for guidelines.

**Thesis Statement Example**

Psychologists have argued for decades about how a person's character is formed. Numerous psychologists believe that one's birth order (i.e. place in the family as the youngest, oldest, or middle child) has the greatest influence. **Birth order can have a significant impact in the formation of a child's character.** Birth order can strongly affect one's relationship with parents, relationships with others, and how one views responsibility as an adult.

The **thesis statement** makes a strong claim about birth order.

**Subpoints** in the thesis or nearby help the reader know how the essay will be organized.
Limit a thesis statement to one or two sentences in length

• Thesis statements are clear and to-the-point, which helps the reader identify the topic and direction of the paper, as well as your position towards the subject.

Technology has decreased our level of connectedness to others because it allows us to disconnect from the people in our physical environment and it does not foster the social skills needed in order to help us to connect to those around us.
Another Thesis example and Thesis Self Test: Compare and contrast essay
Summary of how to construct a Thesis Statement

- Choose a topic that interests you.
- Explore and research your topic and focus on a specific detail. Address a single issue in great detail.
- Start with a question and make the answer your thesis statement.
- Your thesis statement should be debatable, clear to the point, and identify the topic.
- Tailor your thesis to the type of paper you are writing (analytical, expository, argumentative).
- Know the type, purpose, and audience of your paper.
- Limit thesis to one to two sentences, unless stated otherwise.
- Place thesis at the end of the first paragraph, unless your instructor suggested otherwise.
Comments, Questions, or Feedback? Please let us know. If you are still unsure about how to construct a thesis statement, please feel free to contact us in the Learning Commons using your Eagle Q to log in for a conference.

Operating Hours:
Monday – Thursday 7:30 – 7:30
Friday 7:30 – 5:00

Sources Used:
https://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Thesis-Statement
https://courses.lumenlearning.com/wm-writingskillslab/chapter/argumentative-thesis-statements