

# Thesis Statements

Thesis statements help organize the ideas in an essay and academic writers are expected to use thesis statements. A thesis statement conveys the overall idea of the entire essay and is usually, though not always, the last sentence of the first paragraph of the essay.

## Thesis statements:

- A thesis statement presents the essay's limited subject and the writers' point of view, or attitude, about the subject.
- One technique for developing a thesis statement is to formulate a question that will be answered in the essay. The thesis statement should not be the question, however. The thesis statement should be the answer to the question. To help formulate a question, ask "What should the reader know and think about this subject?"
- Think of the thesis statement as answering the questions "So what?" and "What difference does it make?" about your essay.
- Think about how to answer these questions: "What is the point being made?" and "What is it that this essay wants the reader to know and think about the subject?"
- There is no specific "correct" length for a thesis statement. It's okay if the sentence seems long, as long as it conveys the entire point of the essay.
- The thesis point should be arguable. In other words, the thesis should be a statement that a reasonable person might agree or disagree with.
- Avoid using statements like "In this paper I will..." or "This paper will examine the subject of..." in the thesis statement. These statements create a tone that is too personal for academic writing.
- Don't make an announcement. Some writers use the thesis statement merely to announce the limited subject of their paper and forget to indicate their attitude towards the subject.
- Don't make a factual statement. The thesis statement and the essay should focus on an issue capable of being developed as a position. If a fact is used as a thesis, the essay will have no place to go; a fact generally doesn't invite much discussion.
- Don't make a broad statement. Avoid stating the thesis in vague, general, or sweeping terms. Broad statements make it difficult for readers to grasp the essay's point.

## Tips and Tricks!

Once the first draft is finished, some ideas may emerge that change the original focus of the essay. After writing a complete draft of the essay, always check that the thesis statement to be certain the thesis reflects the overall main point that has been made in the essay that has been written. It is okay to go back and adjust the thesis statement to reflect new information that may have been discovered during the essay writing process.

## The Writing Center