

How to Write a Thesis Statement

Most academic papers need to be “thesis-driven.” Don’t worry. It’s not as scary as it sounds. In thesis-driven writing, you tell your reader what that point is at the beginning (your thesis statement), and then you make sure everything else in your paper works to support or prove your point.

A thesis statement is a sentence that answers the question, “What is the main point of this paper?” It can also indicate key divisions in the paper to prepare your reader for what’s ahead. Generally, the thesis statement is the last sentence of the introduction of the paper.

A thesis statement must be:

- A complete sentence
- A statement of the paper’s topic
- A claim that demonstrates the writer’s take/perspective on the topic
- Provable with discussion or evidence from the writer

Two common ways to write a thesis are answering a question given or expanding on a topic and giving reasons. However, there are other ways to write a thesis given the margins of the assignment.

General Question and Answer

If your topic for a paper is a question, then your thesis statement will answer the question provided. The easiest way to do this is by rephrasing the question as a statement.

REMEMBER: you always want to include reasons supporting your answer (usually three)!!!

For example:

Topic: Which is better- McDonalds or Burger King?

Thesis Statement: Burger King is better because their fries are healthier, they provide sesame seed buns, and their food is less greasy.

The thesis statement simply answered the question by rewording it. Moreover, it provided three reasons as to why Burger King is better than McDonalds. This strengthens the thesis statement.

Choosing a Specific Topic

If you are not given a question to write your paper about, you may have been given a broad topic to write about. You need to choose a part of that topic to write about that is narrow enough for you to be able to write a concise paper in the limit given before you try to write your thesis statement.

Once you've chosen a topic, you need to decide what you want to say about it. A good thesis needs to answer the questions, "What do I want other people to think about this topic and why?"

For example:

Topic: Hockey

Thesis: Wayne Gretzky will be considered as the best center in NHL history.

This thesis is a complete sentence, an interesting claim, and can be disagreed by reasonable people. For instance, someone may consider Jonathan Toews as the best center in NHL history. However, the statement can also be proven by giving his statistics of goals, assists, time on ice, knowledge of the game, etc.

Strong Thesis Statements

A strong thesis statement offers more than just a claim; it provides reasons and answers the question "Why?". A simple way of doing this is by adding the word "because" at the end of your thesis statement.

For example:

Wayne Gretzky will be considered as the best center in NHL history **because** of his versatility, performance, and athleticism.

Getting up early is better than staying up late **because** you get more sleep, your brain is able to reboot, and your memory can be enhanced.