

The Thesis Statement: What Is It?

Choose the definition below that works best for you and keep it near your computer as you draft your paper. An effective thesis statement:

- β is a statement of an essay's central theme that makes clear the main idea, the writer's purpose, the focus of the topic, and perhaps the organizational pattern (Troyka 769).
- β is an introductory sentence which names the topics to be developed in the body of an essay (Roberts and Jacobs 1911).
- β is an organizing sentence that plans or forecasts the major topics to be treated in the essay (Roberts and Jacobs 21).
- β lists the parts to be fastened together— the topics in which the central idea is to be demonstrated and argued (Roberts and Jacobs 22).
- β is a concise, memorable summing up of what the writer is trying to prove (Guth and Rico 1842).
- β will control and focus the entire paper, give order to details of the essay by providing unity and a sense of direction, and will specify to the reader the point of the research or essay.
- β is fact + idea.
- β answers the question "What is the point of the essay?"
- β satisfies the reader's desire to know early in the paper what the central idea is and how the essay writer will go about presenting it.
- β acts as a road map to the essay by announcing the destination and suggesting the route for getting there.
- β provides a clear framework for developing a focused analysis of a limited idea.
- β expresses and clarifies the writer's point of view or perspective on a narrowly defined topic.
- β is arguable; the paper proves the thesis with specific, detailed evidence.
- β Is significant and thoughtful, an overarching point that is complex, subtle, and perhaps even unexpected.
- β is an attitude or position taken by a writer or speaker with the purpose of supporting it.

Adapted from "The Thesis Statement: What Is It?" by the [Brenau University Writing Center](#).

Works Cited

- Guth, Hans P., and Gabriele L. Rico. Discovering Literature: Stories, Poems, Plays. 2nd ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1996.
- Roberts, Edgar V., and Henry E. Jacobs. Literature: An Introduction to Reading and Writing. 5th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1998.
- Troyka, Lynn Quitman. Simon and Schuster Handbook for Writers. 5th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1999.



Tips for Writing a Clear and Effective Thesis Statement

- β Research your topic.
- β Choose an approach or idea that interests you. Write about something that elicits your curiosity, agreement, or disagreement. If you are bored by your topic, your reader will be as well.
- β Narrow the focus of your main ideas.
- β Draft a preliminary thesis statement to guide you as you work on the paper; you can refine the language later.
- β Create a thesis that offers an original perspective or insight.
- β Keep your thesis statement visible as you work.
- β Organize the body of your paper so that the topic sentences support the thesis.
- β Some assignments may lead themselves to a three-part thesis statement, but do not feel limited to this approach.
- β When a first draft is complete, revise your thesis statement to make it as sharp, specific, and focused as possible. Choose vivid language and active verbs.
- β As a general rule, the thesis statement should appear at the end of the introduction.
- β Strive to create a single-sentence thesis statement, although more complex papers may require a two- or three-sentence thesis.
- β If applicable, be certain to use the literary text about which you are writing or outside sources to prove your point.
- β See our handouts [Research Paper Format and Documentation Tips](#) and [Writing Research Papers: A Step-by-Step Checklist](#) for additional help.
- β Visit the Writing Center, located in 109 Gamble Hall, for feedback.



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