

Thesis Statement Notes, Checklist, and Practice

- The thesis statement of a paper tells the reader how you will _____ the significance of the subject matter under discussion.
- It is the paper's _____.
- It tells the writer what to _____, and the reader what he/she will be _____.
- The thesis statement directly answers the _____ asked of you. It is an _____ of a question or subject, not the subject itself. The subject, or topic, of an essay might be World War II or Moby Dick; a thesis must then offer a way to _____ the war or the novel.
- It makes a _____ that others might _____.
- It should be _____!
- It is usually a _____ sentence near the beginning of your paper (most often, at the end of the first paragraph) that presents your argument to the reader. The rest of the paper, the body of the essay, _____ and _____ evidence that will persuade the reader of the logic of your interpretation.
- A thesis is the result of a _____ thinking process. Formulating a thesis is not the first thing you do after reading an essay assignment.
- Before you develop an argument on any topic, you have to collect and organize evidence, look for possible relationships between known facts (such as surprising contrasts or similarities), and think about the _____ of these relationships.
- Once you do this thinking, you will probably have a “_____” that presents a basic or main idea and an argument that you think you can support with evidence. Both the argument and your thesis are likely to need _____ along the way.
- Writers use all kinds of techniques to stimulate their thinking and to help them clarify relationships or comprehend the broader significance of a topic and arrive at a thesis statement.

Thesis Statement Checklist

- Do I answer the question?** Re-reading the question prompt after constructing a working thesis can help you fix an argument that misses the focus of the question.
- Have I taken a position that others might challenge or oppose?** If your thesis simply states facts that no one would, or even could, disagree with, it's possible that you are simply providing a summary, rather than making an argument.

Example: “Homework is time-consuming.” This is not a thesis statement because no one in their right mind would disagree with it.

- Is my thesis statement specific enough?** Thesis statements that are too vague often do not have a strong argument. If your thesis contains words like “good” or “successful,” see if you could be more specific: *why* is something “good”; *what specifically* makes something “successful”?
Example: “Homework is good.” This is a poor thesis statement because it’s unclear why it can be good. “Homework can be used to extend skill-building beyond the classroom”
- Does my thesis pass the “So what?” test?** If a reader's first response is, “So what?” then you need to clarify, to forge a relationship, or to connect to a larger issue.
Example: “Water parks are fun.” Your reader will probably say “...why am I reading about this? Why do I care that you think water parks are fun?” “Research suggests that visits to water parks

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can reduce stress among children and teens” (I’m making this up, but this sounds more interesting than “water parks are fun.”)

- **Does my thesis pass the "how and why?" test?** If a reader's first response is "how?" or "why?" your thesis may be too open-ended and lack guidance for the reader. See what you can add to give the reader a better take on your position right from the beginning.

Practice work= stations: **1. Read** the thesis statement. **2. Write** down the thesis in the corresponding box. **3. Decide** if the thesis statements are “effective” or “ineffective” and provide an explanation of your choices. (Are they good or bad? Why?)
