



Thesis Statements

A thesis statement identifies the main idea of your essay. The rest of the essay will be organized around supporting your thesis statement. Thesis statements are found in the introduction paragraph of the essay, often appearing as the last sentence in the introductory paragraph.

As you begin to draft your essay, it is a good idea to start with a working thesis statement. This statement will help focus your ideas, but may change as you research your topic and write your drafts. Review your working thesis statement and revise it accordingly as you work.

Effective Thesis Statements

- Clearly state the essay's main idea.
Beyond simply stating your topic, your thesis statement should state what you will say about your topic.
- Communicate the essay's purpose.
Your essay likely will have a specific purpose. For instance, some essays are informative while others are persuasive. Your thesis statement should convey your purpose to the reader.
- Use clear wording.
Use specific wording in your thesis statement. Avoid vague language, irrelevant details, and confusing terminology when introducing your essay's main point. The thesis statement should give an accurate preview of what you will discuss and indicate the essay's direction and scope.

What to Avoid

- **Announcements of Intent:** Statements like "I will discuss..." or "The thesis of this essay is..." are stylistically distracting and informal in tone. Sometime this is called a "purpose statement." *Example:* This paper will discuss the consequences of poor time management for college students.
- **Statements of Fact:** Simply stating a fact is a dead end that cannot be developed into an essay. *Example:* Smoking is hazardous to your health.
- **Thesis Statement as the Title:** Titles are not detailed enough to properly preview your essay and communicate its purpose.

Examples of Effective Thesis Statements

- Because second-hand smoke poses danger to school-age children, smoking should be banned within 1,000 feet of a school.
- Students should be required to take a course on time management skills before graduating high school.
- The benefits of attending a community college include quality instructors, financial savings, and career-oriented classes.