

## What is a Thesis Statement?

A **thesis statement** establishes focus/purpose and provides structure to your essay. It should be located at the end of the first paragraph/introduction, and it serves as a guide to tell the reader what will be addressed in your writing. It is the most important sentence(s) in your work, especially in argumentative and critical papers. Everything in an essay—introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion—must connect to and support it.

In its most basic form, a thesis statement has the following components (in no particular order):

THESIS = CLAIM + EVIDENCE + TOPIC

The **claim** is the main controlling idea/opinion of your essay. This idea should be prominent all throughout the paper.

The **evidence** is the reasoning that supports your claim and adds credibility to your argument. This is what is going to be elaborated on in your body paragraphs.

The **topic** is the object addressed in your essay. This is what you should base your claim on and provide evidence for.

## What Should a Thesis Statement Look Like?

The following example shows how the components of a thesis statement are combined:

(Topic)	(Claim)	(Evidence)
<b>The Health Department</b>	<i>must administer more frequent diagnostic tests</i>	<u>because of the continuing threat of tuberculosis in the inner city.</u>

### A Thesis Statement Should NOT

Be an announcement	This paper is about why mixed martial arts is too violent.
Be vague	<i>Coco</i> is a good movie, and it was successful.
Simply state a fact	COVID-19 affected many countries around the world.
Simply state an observation	People use Twitter a lot while at work.

### A Thesis Statement SHOULD

1. **Provide a Debatable Claim:** A statement that can be argued FOR and AGAINST

*Example:* People who use Twitter while at work are more productive.

2. **Provide a Claim Supported by Evidence:** A statement that includes clear reasoning

*Example:* People who use Twitter while at work are more productive because it provides mental breaks, which leads to more focused periods of concentration throughout the day.

### How Do I Develop a Thesis Statement?

The chart below presents the ideal procedure of developing a thesis statement:

**Example Topic:** Offering online courses at colleges and universities

<b>1. Use prewriting strategies to come up with claims for the topic</b>	A. Online courses are economically beneficial to students B. Online courses are more convenient for many students
<b>2. Search for evidence to support those claims with solid reasoning</b>	A. Students save on transportation and childcare B. Students who work and/or have children can manage their classes on their own time and schedule
<b>3. Combine your claims and your evidence to create a cohesive argument</b>	More online courses should be offered at universities because students can save money on transportation and childcare, and they can also better manage their time for their jobs and family.

### Other Common Questions About Thesis Statements

**Is a thesis needed in all essays?**

**Yes.** The thesis statement establishes focus and purpose to your essay, and it also creates an arguable claim. Although not every assignment will require an argument, there must still be some sort of structure to it, and a thesis statement is the best way to provide that.

**Should the thesis be written first?**

**No.** There is no rule that you *must* write it first. In fact, many writers develop their thesis while drafting their essay. This is because during the initial writing phase, thoughts and claims are developed and become clearer. Ultimately, the final version of the thesis statement may not be solidified until a draft is almost complete.

**Does the thesis have to be one sentence long?**

**No.** A thesis can be more than one sentence. Generally, though, you want it to be as concise as possible, so keeping it to one sentence is highly recommended.

**References:**

*How to Write a Thesis Statement in Four Easy Steps.* The Writing Center of Princeton.  
<https://writingcenterofprinceton.com/how-to-write-a-thesis-statement-in-four-easy-steps/>

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Procter, M. *Using Thesis Statements.* University of Toronto: Writing Advice.  
<https://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/planning/thesis-statements/>

*The Strong vs. Weak Thesis Statement.* Peachy Essay. <https://peachyessay.com/blogs/strong-vs-weak-thesis-statement/>

**Disclaimer:** We did not include all of the resources conferred to formulate this handout. We encourage students to conduct further research to find additional resources. The format of this list is not commensurate with a standard format.