

THESIS STATEMENTS

WRITING



WHAT IS A THESIS?

The **thesis** is the main point of an essay written clearly and directly in one to two sentences. In academic essays, it generally appears at the end of the introduction.

The thesis is like a road map: It helps readers predict what they will see along the way.



The thesis is also like an umbrella: Everything after the thesis needs to "fit under" it--relate and connect back to it.

STEP 1: DIGEST THE PROMPT

Before writing your thesis, make sure you understand exactly what the prompt is asking. Read closely and annotate your prompt.

STEP 2: WHAT KIND OF ESSAY ARE YOU WRITING?

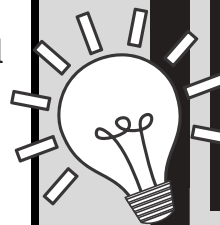
- **Analytical:** breaks down an issue or an idea into its component parts; evaluates the issue or idea
- **Expository:** explains something to the audience
- **Argumentative:** makes a claim about a topic and justifies the claim with specific evidence

STEP 3: WHAT DOES YOUR THESIS NEED TO DO?

- An **analytical** thesis explains the overall topic or subject. The body paragraphs break down the subject into parts, explaining each part in depth, showing how they fit together, and evaluating them.
- An **expository** thesis describes the main topic or subject. Each body paragraph further explains the subject.
- An **argumentative** thesis states the writer's claim clearly and firmly. Each body paragraph centers on one reason why the claim is valid and gives support for it.

THESIS STATEMENT EXAMPLES

- **Analytical:** An analysis of the factory farming industry in the U.S. reveals that profit rather than product quality is the deciding factor in company practices.
- **Expository:** Factory farmed animals go through multiple steps on the journey from birth to our plates.
- **Argumentative:** The factory farming industry is unethical because it harms animals and human consumers alike.

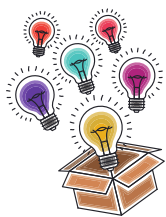


Tip: don't be afraid to revise your thesis as you write. Begin writing with a specific main point in mind but see where your ideas lead you.



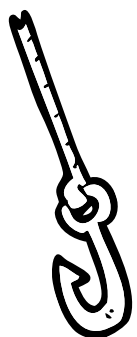
THESIS DOS AND DON'TS

- **Don't:** be vague or mysterious
- **Do:** be as specific as possible



- **Don't:** list the topics of each body paragraph (unless the assignment instructs you to do so)
- **Do:** explain your larger topic and the idea you want your readers to get about it

- **Don't:** squish too many ideas into a single sentence
- **Do:** split up your sentence if it gets too long



- **Don't:** craft a "hook" or "attention getter" that is disconnected from your thesis
- **Do:** aim for a nice flow from the hook to the thesis

PRACTICE THESIS REVISION

What mistake is each thesis making? How could you rewrite them to fix the error and make them stronger?

1) This essay will give my reaction to Al Gore's view of global warming.

2) The play *Macbeth* shows that men and women differ in emotionalism, loyalty, and the way they deal with guilty feelings.

3) Many people believe that the Constitution is an unquestionable document whose ideas must be taken literally, but I believe that the Constitution is a living document that should be open to interpretation and updated as our country progresses, while still keeping within the general ideals that our nation was founded upon.

Possible Answers:

1) Needs to be more specific: While Al Gore does provide some strong evidence for global warming, he relies too heavily on scaring his audience, which weakens his argument.

2) Needs to give the overall point instead of listing subtopics: The differences between Lady and Lord Macbeth's reactions to Duncan's murder demonstrate Shakespeare's view that men are more simplistic and straightforward than women.

3) Needs to be divided into two sentences: Many people believe that the Constitution is an unquestionable document whose ideas must be taken literally. However, I believe that the Constitution is a living document that should be open to interpretation and updated as our country progresses, while still keeping within the general ideals that our nation was founded upon.