

Crafting Thesis Statements

A **thesis statement** is a sentence (or two) that articulates your central argument. In academic writing, your thesis statement will depend on the *genre* of writing you are doing (argumentative writing, expository writing, or analytical writing). A thesis statement focuses on the specific argument of the paper and gives your reader an idea of how that argument will unfold.

Features of an effective thesis statement:

- Specific and concise
- Suggests the essay's direction, scope, and emphasis
- Makes a claim that is arguable (i.e. not a statement of fact)
- Establishes the essay's significance
- Appears at the end of the introduction

****A working thesis statement** is an essential step in crafting your paper. It allows you to begin your research, but gives you space to modify and refine your thesis as your own research and knowledge develops or changes. Be prepared to modify—if not, sometimes, throw out—a thesis statement as you read and learn more about your topic.**

Approaches for Writing a Thesis Statement:

- **Making a factual claim:** “Although scholars have done this, they have not done ”
- **Making a claim of value:** “Scholars have looked at X, but they have not considered Y. I will focus on Y because this area is not examined closely in the field.”
- **Making a claim for common ground:** Pointing out mutual points of agreement between what others have found and what *you* think—and then advancing *your own point in the argument* in order to find a solution to a problem that others (may) find acceptable.

Structure of a Thesis Statement:

- WHAT (specific argument you will make in this paper)
- HOW (the methods or tools/sources/pieces of evidence you will use to prove your argument; this is also the “map” of your essay)
- WHY (the significance of your argument to your overall topic; So What? of the essay)

Thesis Statement Starter Sentences: Use these to craft a *working thesis statement*. These should be further refined as you write your paper and should not appear in the same structure in your final paper.

- To write your WHAT: “In this essay, I will argue ”
- To write your HOW: “I will argue this by/through ”
- To write your WHY: “The significance of this argument is ”