

# Thesis Statements

You might think about a thesis statement as the foundation for your argument—a clear thesis statement is crucial to building a strong, stable argument.

## What Is a Thesis Statement?

A thesis statement is the claim that is argued throughout a paper. It is the road map that tells your reader what they will find in the rest of your paper. The thesis is typically a single sentence that is at the end of the introduction paragraph.

## Tips for a Strong Thesis

### Answer the Question

If you are provided with a question prompt, one way to make your thesis stronger is to phrase it as a possible answer to the prompt.

### Make an Arguable Claim

If you have a thesis statement that no one disagrees with, it is likely you have a summary or a fact, rather than a claim. A strong thesis is a claim that other people may disagree with.

### Support Your Thesis in the Essay

This may seem obvious, but if your essay doesn't support your thesis, one of them will need to change. It is okay to change your thesis as you write your paper, but it is important that your final thesis is supported throughout your paper.

### Use Appropriate Language

Different types of essays have varying requirements for how academic a paper must be. In a paper that is less formal, or opinion based, it is typically appropriate to use first person phrases such as "I will argue..." or "My essay..." in your thesis. In most academic, research-based papers, however, it can be difficult to use these phrases and still maintain the required level of professionalism. When writing your thesis, make sure its language is appropriate for the type of essay.

### Be Clear and Specific

Being specific in your thesis will help you make sure you argue it effectively in your paper—it is easier to see the points your thesis is trying to make and then support those points. It can also make sure your paper isn't spread too thin from trying to argue a broad thesis statement.

## Steps of thesis development

## Choose Your Topic

Your topic should focus on a single idea that can be narrowed further as you continue to develop your thesis. The example below is of a pretty broad topic. When you read it, ask yourself what additional, specific claims the writer could make about the topic. Consider what more you might want to know about it.

*Example (too broad):* Gender roles in Shakespearean plays

## Develop a Purpose Statement

A purpose statement announces the topic of your paper, but it doesn't state the point you will be arguing in the paper.

*Example:* This paper will analyze the role of women in *As You Like It*.

Developing a purpose statement like this may not be necessary, but it can be helpful to use a purpose statement as a placeholder if you have a topic but don't know yet what you want your thesis statement to be. Notice that in the example above, the writer has narrowed the broad topic of gender roles to looking specifically at women's roles, and has narrowed Shakespearean plays to a specific play, *As You Like It*.

## Draft a Working Thesis Statement

Think of a working thesis statement as the first draft of your thesis. It should be a complete thesis statement, but it can change as you continue writing your essay. The purpose of a working thesis statement is to narrow your focus when beginning the drafting process. This helps to ensure a logically consistent paper.

*Example:* When Rosalind disguises herself as a man in *As You Like It*, she develops agency and control, which she did not have as a woman.

Now, the thesis statement is making an arguable, specific claim about the role of women in *As You Like It*. We can expect that in the rest of the paper, the writer will show examples of Rosalind not having agency as a woman, and then experience agency and control after she disguises herself as a man.

## Finalize the Thesis to Align with Your Essay

After you have a solid draft of your essay, read through your paper, and make sure your thesis statement is making the same claim as your essay. If not, edit the thesis so it doesn't make any claims not argued in the paper.

*Example:* Though Rosalind gains power and agency when she disguises herself as a man, she can only return to the normal world once she gives up her disguise and embraces her true identity.

## Conclusion

Your thesis statement is the heart of your essay, so treat it with care. Although these examples method for creating a strong thesis are one approach, no two thesis statements are alike. Don't be afraid to experiment with your claims and sentence structure!