



Writing a Thesis Statement

A **THESIS statement** is your whole essay condensed (most often) into **one sentence** and is most commonly found at the end of your introduction. Your thesis needs to reflect the assignment you are working on by declaring an answer to the question being asked of you from the prompt.

While a thesis is commonly an argument, it can also be an interpretation of an issue (*the death penalty*), an informative statement (*educating the reader on an issue*), or an opinion to be supported with evidence, examples, and details.

A Good Thesis:

- communicates a specific idea about the topic your essay will cover (claim)
- often suggests the writer's tone or attitude about the main point/claim
- Includes details in support of the claim (often three or more)
- Can include a counter claim

A thesis should make a specific point, be narrow enough to meet your word/page limit, and guide the reader through the paper.

Be Specific

- Try not to state something obvious: *In this essay, I will discuss Romeo and Juliet.* Be more specific about **what** you will discuss or what point you want to make.
- Avoid stating a fact: *Romeo and Juliet is a play about star-crossed lovers.* This is accurate information, but it does not make a point about the play.
- Avoid making a general observation: *"Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet is an interesting play."* (**What** about the play makes it interesting? Again, what specific point are you trying to make?)

Be Narrow Enough

The focus of your paper as stated in the thesis needs to comfortably fit your page length. For example, three pages isn't enough space to write an adequate paper on the complete works of Shakespeare. However, in three pages you could write about a passage, a character, or a theme from the play. Focus on your point!

Guide the Reader

- A strong thesis often gives the reader a preview of your ideas: e.g. "The death penalty should be abolished because it is inhumane, a drain on state and federal funds, and sometimes results in the death of innocent people."
- The topic sentences in your body paragraphs should refer back to and support your thesis.

There are **two parts** to a thesis. The **first part** states the topic and position on the topic. The **second part** clarifies which points will be developed throughout the body of the essay.

Sample Thesis:



Apples are a healthy choice because they have essential nutrients, are available in a wide range of

Topic of the essay

Point 1

Point 2

flavors and textures, and can be readily obtained.

Point 3

Compare and Contrast:

When deciding whether to attend a college close to home or far away, it is helpful to consider living expenses, cost of tuition, and emotional support.

Through analysis and comparison of the yearly salary, amount of work hours in a week, job security, advancement in a field, and overall happiness in what you do, choosing a major becomes easier.

Literary Analysis:

In Kate Chopin’s “The Storm,” the forces of Mother Nature, human nature, and desire create a work of fiction that portrays adultery in a casual, non-judgmental light.

Poetry Explication:

The words, images, and metaphors in Wordsworth’s “Daffodils” allow the speaker to express an optimistic attitude about life.

Research:

New research suggests that interviewing prospective employees without initially reviewing their resume results in more effective hiring.

Argumentative:

The death penalty should be abolished because some prisoners on death row are innocent, it costs more to execute someone than to hold a person in jail, and convicts can have a chance to give back to the community.

NOTE: Your thesis will most likely change over the course of the writing process. While you may have to start with a working thesis to help narrow your essay’s topic, research and revision of your topic should also be shown in your final draft’s thesis.