

Thesis Statements Deconstructed



Thesis Statement – A thesis is the roadmap for the paper, representing the path of your argument to the reader.

It is a **direct statement** that explains the topic of your essay, what you believe about that topic, and why you believe it. It is an arguable assertion that can be proven with evidence and opinions, and it is **most often placed at the end of the introductory paragraph**.

WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR?

- A thesis lets the reader know what to expect or look for in the essay.
- A thesis helps you narrow down a more general topic, find your own angle, and express your opinion.

WHAT DOES IT CONSIST OF?

A thesis statement is made up of three different parts. **Every thesis needs these three things:**

- Identification (What is the topic you are talking about?)
- Claim (What do you believe about the topic?)
- Support (What are the 3 main reasons you can support your claim? This will basically outline the body paragraphs of your essay.)

You will need to form these three parts into a **complete argumentative sentence**:

Identification of Topic + Claim (belief about topic) + **Support** (reason 1, reason 2, and reason 3)

Example: The drinking age should be lowered to 18 because people of that age already receive other adult responsibilities, including the right to vote, the ability to join the armed forces, and the potential to go to prison.

WHAT DO EFFECTIVE THESIS STATEMENTS LOOK LIKE?

An effective thesis should:

- *be an argument, not a fact.*

Too Factual: The first polygraph was developed by Dr. John A. Larson in 1921.

Revised: Because the polygraph has not been proved reliable, even under controlled conditions, its use by private employers should be banned.

- *be sharply focused, not too vague or general*

Too Vague: Many of the hip-hop songs are disgusting.

Revised: Many hip-hop songs are sexist because they objectify women, focus on their body parts, and reduce their role in society to a sexual one.

- *when possible, use an "although . . . actually" format.*

This format gives readers something new to consider, telling them that what they thought to be previously true really isn't. It is an efficient way to present the **counterargument** to your claim, admitting that another side to the issue exists.

Example: *Although* many people believe that extraterrestrials and crop circles are a figment of the imagination, *actually* there is strong evidence suggested by collective, distinct anecdotes that alien encounters are real.

Note: "actually" isn't always necessary. It is often implied with the clause "although."

Adapted from <http://schoolwires.henry.k12.ga.us>