



THESIS STATEMENTS

What Is a Thesis Statement?

A thesis statement is the main idea of your essay. It tells your reader:

- what your topic is
- what you think about that topic
- what direction your paper will take

Think of your thesis as a roadmap. It shows your reader where your paper is going and helps you stay focused as you write.

Why Is a Thesis Important?

A strong thesis:

- helps your reader understand your argument
- keeps your writing focused and organized
- guides your body paragraphs

Without a clear thesis, your paper may feel confusing or incomplete.

When Should You Write Your Thesis?

Some writers create a thesis before they begin writing. However, many students find it easier to write their thesis after developing their ideas. Writing your body paragraphs first can help you understand your main point more clearly. Then, you can create a stronger, more accurate thesis.

Traditional Approach (Thesis First)

- Choose a topic
- Write a thesis

- Write body paragraphs to support it

Discovery Approach (Recommended for Many Students)

- Choose a topic
- Write body paragraphs to explore ideas
- Look for your main point
- Write your thesis based on what you've written

What Makes a Strong Thesis?

A strong thesis should be:

- specific
- arguable
- clear
- complete

A strong thesis is specific and focused, not too general.

Example (**weak**): Social media is bad.

Example (**strong**): Excessive social media use can harm college students' mental health by increasing anxiety and reducing sleep.

A strong thesis presents an arguable claim, something someone could disagree with.

Example (**weak**): College students use technology.

Example (**strong**): Colleges should limit in-class technology use to improve student focus.

A strong thesis should be clear, and your reader should easily understand your point and shouldn't have to guess what you mean.

A strong thesis should be complete (a full sentence, not a fragment or question).

Weak vs. Strong Thesis Examples

Weak Thesis: College is hard.

Why it doesn't work:

- Too general
- No clear argument
- No direction

Strong Thesis: First-year college students often struggle with time management because they must balance classes, work, and personal responsibilities.

Why it works:

- Specific
- Explains why
- Gives direction

How to Write a Thesis (Step-by-Step)

Step 1: Choose Your Topic

Example: online classes

Step 2: Ask a Question

What are the advantages of online classes?

Step 3: Answer the Question

Online classes offer flexibility and increased access to education.

Step 4: Turn It Into a Thesis

Online classes benefit students because they provide flexibility and increase access to education.

Helpful Formula

[Topic] + [your opinion] + [reason(s)]

Example:

College students should take a study skills course because it improves time management and academic success.

Where Does the Thesis Go?

In most academic essays, the thesis appears at the end of the introduction paragraph.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Being Too Vague

Example: People have different opinions about school.

Fix: Make it more specific.

Writing a Fact Instead of an Argument

Example: Many students work part-time jobs.

Fix: Add a claim: Working part-time jobs can negatively affect students' academic performance.

Writing a Question Instead of a Statement

Example: Should students be required to take online classes?

Fix: Turn it into a statement.

Using "I Think" or "I Believe"

Example: I think students need more support.

Fix: Students need more academic support to succeed in college.