

Composing a Thesis Statement

What is the point of a thesis statement?

A thesis statement, which is usually found at the end of the introductory paragraph, is the main point of your essay. It tells the audience what you will be talking about or what you will be arguing. In many ways, the thesis statement directs the reader's attention to exactly what you want the audience to take away from your essay.

Here are some helpful tips to guide you to help compose your thesis:

1. What kind of essay are you writing?
 - a. Analytical: breaks down and evaluates an issue or idea, then explains this breakdown to the audience.
 - b. Expository: explains something to the audience.
 - c. Argumentative: makes a claim and justifies the claim through evidence provided in the body paragraphs.
2. Your thesis statement should be specific and only cover what you will discuss with supporting evidence in the body of your essay.
3. Your thesis statement is usually found at the end of the introductory paragraph, although the length and position of your thesis should be appropriate to the length of the essay (i.e.: For a longer paper—20+ pages—the introduction may be two or more paragraphs long, and the accompanying thesis may take two or three sentences to adequately introduce the argument).
4. Because your topic may change or become more focused as you write, you may need to revise your thesis to reflect the ideas you present in the body of the essay. Many writers often skip the introduction altogether until they are sure what they are saying in the main body paragraphs. This allows them to tailor the thesis statement to exactly what they are arguing.

Your thesis statement should NOT:

- ask a question
- be confusing
- state something obvious

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Examples of how to construct effective thesis statements:

Closed Thesis Statement:

Stance on the topic: (ex: I believe that guns laws need to be more restrictive.)

- Points for evidence:
1. Guns are too accessible.
 2. Guns promote violence.
 3. Guns kill people.

Thesis: The gun laws of the United States need to be more restrictive because guns are too accessible, they promote violence, and they are used to kill people.

In other words: (Argument of the essay, because of point #1, point #2, and point #3.)

Your Argument: _____

Point #1: _____

Point #2: _____

Point #3: _____

Additional Point(s): _____

Thesis Statement:

Compare/Contrast: