



What is it?

A thesis statement is a concise and specific sentence or a couple of sentences that present the main point or argument of an essay, research paper, or any other written work.

A well-crafted thesis statement:

- Clearly states the main point or argument of the paper.
- Provides a preview of the topics or points that will be discussed in the body of the work.
- Offers a stance or perspective on the topic being addressed.

"Thesis statements act like a reliable compass, directing readers along a clear path that leads to the meaningful destinations your writing reveals."

Steps

1. Narrow Your Subject

After reading your writing prompt, narrow your focus. What is the topic of your essay?

2. Find Your Position

Why are you writing about this topic? Why is this important?

3. Forecast

What will you be talking about in the paper? What are your reasons for why the subject is important?

4. Revise

As your ideas develop and evolve during the writing process, you may need to revise your thesis to better reflect what is being written in the essay.

Consider the following:

- Did I answer the prompt?
- Am I presenting a position others may challenge or oppose? If not, you may be presenting a summary instead of a thesis.
- Is my thesis statement specific enough? A thesis statement that is too vague may not have a strong argument.
- Does my thesis pass the “so what?” test? Your thesis should connect to a larger issue.
- Does my essay support my thesis? Re-read your essay to ensure the thesis aligns with the statements and evidence presented in the essay.
- Is your position clear? If the reader is asking “how?” or “why” after reading your thesis, it may be too open-ended.

Let's Practice!

Suppose your instructor assigns the following prompt:

Drawing on current examples and research, present a well-structured argument that examines both the positive contributions and potential drawbacks of AI's growing influence on our world.

After some brainstorming, you might start with this working thesis:

AI impacts society in both positive and negative ways.

Use the questions above to help you revise this general statement into a stronger thesis.

- **Did I answer the prompt?** You can see that the thesis only answers the prompt very vaguely, and does not specify the positive contributions and potential drawbacks of AI.
- **Am I presenting a position others may challenge or oppose?** Not quite. Only people who view AI as purely negative or purely positive may disagree with this thesis.
- **Is my thesis statement specific enough?** No. What are the positive and negative ways AI influences the world?
- **Does my thesis pass the "so what?" test?** No. How does AI influence society in positive and negative ways? Why should anyone be concerned with this?
- **Is your position clear?** Not really.

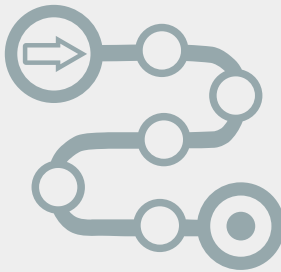
After reflecting on these questions, it is evident that the thesis statement does not take a specific position.

Let's Practice! Cont.

Let's draft another thesis that addresses the prompt, and takes a clear stance:

As AI becomes a larger part of everyday life, it is important to consider both its advantages and its drawbacks. While AI can improve speed and convenience in many areas, it also raises serious concerns such as job loss, privacy issues, and unfair treatment in systems like hiring algorithms, predictive policing, and healthcare diagnostics.

As you can see, this thesis statement addresses the prompt, presents a clear position, is specific, and clarifies why we should be concerned with this issue.



Where does it go?

Since it serves as a roadmap for the reader, outlining the central idea and focus of the piece, the thesis is typically introduced early in the essay.

For example, it may be placed at end of the introductory paragraph that offers a reader context.

Remember that you're not writing a mystery story! Offer your reader the argument early on in your essay. Then, you can show readers why your argument is a good one in the body paragraphs.

Thesis Machine

This worksheet can help you write a thesis statement.

Step One: Subject

Example: Artificial Intelligence

What is your subject?

Step Two: Position

Example: Artificial Intelligence is impacting society in a negative way.

What is your position?

Step Three: Forecast & Support

Example: The loss of jobs, people are not learning to think critically, and biases are being shared as fact.

What is your forecast? How do you support your position?

Final step: Combine the Subject, Position, and Forecast into a single sentence.

Example: Artificial Intelligence is causing people to lose their jobs, ability to think critically, and amplifies biases.

What is your thesis statement?