



# **How to Write a Thesis Statement**

# **Why do you need a thesis?**

- **It gives your essay a sense of purpose**
- **It narrows your subject**
- **It previews the order or arrangement of your essay**

# Thesis Requirements

1. The topic is **SPECIFIC**
2. It should take a **STANCE**, position, or opinion
3. It is **RELEVANT**, interesting, thought-provoking, even controversial (make the reader interested)
4. It should answer the questions **HOW** or **WHY**.
5. It should **NOT BE AN ANNOUNCEMENT**
6. It is **CONCISE**: Usually one sentence

# From TOPIC to THESIS

1. Do your research, reading, or pre-writing, and choose a topic:
  - a) **EXAMPLE: Art in education**
2. Based on your research or pre-writing, take a stance on the topic
  - a) **EXAMPLE: Art education is essential to creating well-rounded students.**
3. Answer **HOW** or **WHY**
  - a) **EXAMPLE answers HOW: Art education is essential to creating well-rounded students by encouraging their creativity.**

# Thesis statement: **Specific**

Your statement should focus on one specific, narrowed area of the topic

## Thesis is too broad

**Exercise can be beneficial.**

## Specific Thesis

**Regular exercise is beneficial by reducing fat, increasing endurance, and strengthening the heart.**

# Thesis statement: **Stance**

Your thesis statement should approach the topic from an interesting perspective or opinion that could be argued for or against. A fact is not a thesis.

## Thesis without stance

Harry Potter is a famous book series.

## Thesis with perspective

Although the Harry Potter series is popular, parents should be aware that its themes of witchcraft and violence are not advisable for young children.

# Thesis statement: **Relevance**

Your thesis statement should challenge the reader to think in new ways. If it's too obvious, the reader won't care--  
**SO WHAT?**

## Uninteresting thesis

Going to college will benefit you greatly by challenging you to be your best.

## Thesis that is interesting

Going to college has great benefits, but the benefits of trade schools can far outweigh the these benefits by providing a more affordable option.

# **Thesis statement: How & Why?**

**Your thesis should provide a stance then provide further support that answers the questions HOW or WHY.**

**Doesn't answer how or why**

**Music therapy offers an alternative to medication in cases of depression and anxiety, but it's not often used.**

**Explains how or why**

**In the fight against mood disorders, the often-overlooked option of music therapy offers a powerful alternative to medication that is soothing, mindful, and inexpensive.**

# **Thesis statement: Not an announcement**

**Don't announce your thesis. It should flow with the rest of the introduction.**

## **Thesis too obvious**

**In this essay, I will explain two reasons why you should take care of your teeth: number one, your teeth will look good, number two, you will feel better.**

**This paper is about why cats are better than all other pets because they live long and like to play.**

## **Thesis is well developed**

**Oral health will help you maintain a healthy, attractive smile that will last a lifetime.**

**Research proves that cats make superior pets due to their longevity, temperament, and playful nature.**

# Thesis statement: **Concise**

Your thesis needs to be complex but to the point, usually no more than one sentence long.

## Thesis too long

Contrary to popular belief, Disney movies do not show positive role models for girls. Disney heroines often need to be saved by a Prince. They have unrealistic body types, and teach girls that only princesses can have interesting lives.

## Concise Thesis

Disney heroines teach girls that they have to be beautiful, helpless princesses, thus creating unrealistic expectations.

# A Thesis formula

Topic + Opinion + How / why

(How or why in 3 points for a 5 paragraph essay)

**Foreign films are far more sophisticated than American films** due to their complex plots, artistic nature, and taboo themes.

# From Thesis to 5 paragraphs

Take each point in your thesis and expand it into your three body paragraphs. Each paragraph will need supporting evidence:

*Foreign films are far more sophisticated than American films due to their **complex plots**, **artistic cinematography**, and **taboo themes**.*

I. Intro

II. **Complex foreign plots vs. simple American plots**

III. **Artistic foreign cinematography vs. mainstream American cinematography**

IV. **Taboo foreign themes vs. safe American themes**

V. Conclusions