

# *Crafting the Thesis Statement*



## The Thesis

All good writing contains a thesis.

Every sentence in the writing in some way points back to the thesis.

It is the main idea, the controlling thought, theme.

# An Argumentative Thesis

“An argumentative paper makes a claim about a topic and justifies this claim with specific evidence. The claim could be an opinion, a policy proposal, an evaluation, a cause-and-effect statement, or an interpretation. The goal of the argumentative paper is to convince the audience that the claim is true based on the evidence provided.”

For more information visit this site (from which the above quote is taken): visit Purdue OWL: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/545/01/>

# Topic, Purpose, Thesis, Organizational Plan

- Topic (subject) is the specific area of intense investigation:
  - The US role in World War I
  - Colonizing Mars
- A guiding question or purpose is what you want to accomplish in the research paper
  - What are the effects of dams on salmon in the Columbia River?
  - What is the extent of damage caused by plastic bags in the Pacific Ocean?
- Thesis is your position on the topic
  - Plastic damages the ocean because birds, mammals and fish ingest the debris and die.
  - Note the similarity to the purpose.

# Thesis Generator

Prompt:	Your Response:
1. Identify the <i>subject</i> (topic) of your paper	Supporting public radio
2. Turn your subject into a guiding question or purpose	How does supporting public radio improve our community?
3. Answer your question with a statement	Public radio keeps the community informed about local, state and national news; connected with local events and people; and serves a vital role during natural disasters and other community emergencies.
4. Refine this statement into a <u>working thesis</u>	Supporting public radio is vital to a well-connected and informed community.

## More about good thesis statements:

- Identify areas of focus about which you have plenty of information:
  - For example if your topic was Benjamin Franklin, you might find a great deal of information about his scientific discoveries, his role as a statesman in early America, and his writings.
- Determine what the areas of focus have in common or what they prove about the topic.
  - You might notice that Benjamin Franklin was active in a variety of professions. He did a lot of different things with his life.
- Write your thesis so that it clearly states what you will be able to prove using the information you have gathered.
  - Benjamin Franklin was a versatile man whose scientific inventions, statesmanship, and writing still influence our world today.

# Thesis is not a title nor an announcement

Title	Thesis
Homes and Schools	Parents ought to participate more in the education of their children.
The Fad of Divorce	Too many people get divorced for trivial reasons.

Announcement	Thesis
I want to share with you some thoughts about our space program.	Our space program is a waste of money.
The thesis of this paper is the difficulty of solving our environmental problems.	Solving our environmental problems is more difficult than many environmentalists believe.

# A GOOD thesis statement is restricted

A good thesis statement deals with restricted, bite size issues rather than issues that would require a lifetime to discuss intelligently. The more restricted the thesis, the better the chances are for supporting it fully.

Poor	Better
The world is in a terrible mess.	The United Nations should be given more peacekeeping powers.
People are too selfish.	Human selfishness is seen at its worst during rush hour in large urban areas.
Crime must be stopped.	Our courts should hand out tougher sentences to habitual criminals.

# A GOOD thesis statement is unified

The thesis statement expresses one major idea about its subject. The tight structural strength of a paper depends on its working to support that one idea.

Poor	Better
<p>Detective stories are not a high form of literature, but people have always been fascinated by them, and many fine writers have experimented with them.</p>	<p>Detective stories appeal to the basic human desire for solving mysteries.</p>
<p>The new health program is excellent, but it has several drawbacks, and it should be run only on an experimental basis for two or three years.</p>	<p>Despite its general excellence, the new health program should be run only on an experimental basis for two or three years.</p>

# *A good thesis statement is specific.*

- *A strong thesis takes some sort of stand.*
  - *For example, a paper for a class on fitness, you might choose to evaluate a popular weight-loss product.*
    - *There are some negative and positive aspects to the Banana Herb Supplement.*
      - *Weak because it fails to take a stand.*
      - *Because Banana Herb Supplement promotes rapid weight loss that results in the loss of muscle and lean body mass, it poses a potential danger to customers.*

- *A strong thesis justifies discussion*

- *If your paper is on kinship systems, using your own family as an example, you might come up with either of these two thesis statements:*

- *My family is an extended family.*

- *Weak – because it states only an observation and the reader cannot tell the point of the statement / paper.*

- *While most American families would view consanguine marriage as a threat to the nuclear family structure, many Iranian families, like my own, believe that these marriages help reinforce kinship ties in an extended family.*

- *Strong thesis because it shows personal experience contradicting a widely-accepted view.*

- *A strong thesis expresses one main idea*
  - *For example: Companies need to exploit the marketing potential of the Internet, and web pages can provide both advertising and customer support.*
    - *Weak because the reader can't decide whether the paper is about marketing on the Internet or web pages.*
  - *Another example: Because the Internet is filled with tremendous marketing potential, companies should exploit this potential by using web pages that offer both advertising and customer support.*
    - *Strong because it shows how the two ideas are related*

*Hint: a great many clear and engaging thesis statements contain words like: because, since, so, although, unless, and however*