



Developing a Thesis Statement

The thesis statement is a promise to your reader regarding the content of your paper. It usually appears at the end of the introductory paragraph.

Step 1

Pick a topic that fulfills the assignment guidelines.

The most important consideration when choosing a topic is *relevance*. Make sure your topic fits with the assignment requirements. Your instructor might give you a specific topic, or a list from which to choose. In other cases, you may have the opportunity to select something that interests you.

Step 2

Focus your topic.

If your topic is too broad, then you will have to do extensive research, and in a short essay, you will not be able to do in-depth analysis. Take the time to *narrow* your topic. Here are some tips:

1. Do some background reading on the subject in an encyclopedia or online, and find a particular *component* or *position* that you would like to explore.
2. Consider any *questions* or *problems* that arise about the topic that you would like to write on.
3. Limit to a specific *location*, *time period*, *person*, *event* or *object* related to your topic.

Step 3

Make your case and support it.

A carefully developed argument is a key component to giving your essay direction. In the process of constructing your claim, you should collect all the evidence that supports (and opposes) your position. This will become the foundation for your thesis. Your thesis should have two parts:

1. A *claim* which your paper will strive to prove.
2. An overview of the *support* for your claim. This part of your thesis is often preceded by the word “because.”

