

How to Write a Thesis Statement

When we write we need to persuade our audience of our viewpoint. This form of persuasion is referred to as your academic argument, which should follow a predictable pattern in your writing. The thesis statement forms a part of your introduction. After setting the context on your topic, you state what you aim to do in the essay. Alternatively you state the viewpoint or argument that you will be focusing on the essay. This sentence is the thesis statement, and it serves as a summary of the argument you'll make in the rest of your paper.

A thesis statement should:

- Be concise
- Tell the reader how you will address the subject matter, e.g. what your argument will be, will you discuss, explain etc
- Explain any specific methods or resources you are using
- Makes a claim, e.g. states the reason for your study

Tips for writing a successful thesis statement:

- Be as clear and as specific as possible; avoid vague words.
- Indicate the point of your paper but avoid sentence structures like, "The point of my paper is..."
- It may take many drafts until you arrive at the most informative statement

Example:

Original thesis: There are serious objections to today's treatment of HIV which will be looked at in this essay.

Revised theses: Today's treatment of HIV/AIDS has more side effects than benefits. This statement will be discussed extensively using clinical data obtained from Groote Schuur Hospital.

In evaluating your thesis statement, ask the following questions:

- Did I tell my reader what I am about to do in my essay?
- Have I clearly stated my position on the subject?
- Is my thesis statement specific enough?
- Is my thesis statement supported by the rest of my essay?

Here are some examples of thesis statements:

- In this essay the genetic disorder, albinism will be **discussed** with reference to the social implications.
- This report will **analyse** the different types of albinism and provide recommendations to clinicians on how to effectively treat this disorder.
- We will **explain** the current treatment of HIV/AIDS in South Africa emphasising on the benefits to patients.

Adapted from: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Thesis statements. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://cssac.unc.edu/> (Accessed 11 March 2015)

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