

How to Write a Thesis Statement

Any essay needs an effective thesis statement. But what is a thesis statement? Great question!

A thesis statement:

- is usually one (maybe two) sentence(s)
- is normally found at the end of an introduction or introductory paragraph
- indicates the main point or controlling idea of an expository or informative paper
- asserts a claim or statement to be proved in an argumentative or persuasive paper
- evaluates a topic or issue in an analysis paper
- addresses the purpose of the prompt, task, or assignment
- provides focus for the written piece

One of the easiest mistakes to make when writing a thesis statement is confusing a thesis statement with a topic. A topic might be “favorite foods.” A thesis statement, on the other hand, takes this one step further and says something about your topic: Tacos are better than burritos.

It's a good idea to draft a thesis statement before you do too much writing. This helps you focus; it's your roadmap or blueprint. We call this a “working thesis,” though, so if you end up changing or adjusting it later, that's okay.

Here are a few other tips to consider:

1. Be specific in your word choice. Include details or show the relationship of ideas with words like “because.”

Good: The best pet is a cat.

Better: Cats make the best pets for busy people **because** they require less exercise and can be left for longer periods of time.

Good: Cricket and baseball are alike in some ways and different in others.

Better: **Although** both cricket and baseball use a bat and ball, the games are vastly different.

Good: Schools should move to a four-day week.

Better: Academic and behavioral indicators suggest that a four-day week will improve student and school performance.

2. Avoid statements like “In this paper, I will...” or “I think...” These phrases aren't really needed and can take away from the points you are making.

Good: In this paper, I will explain how to knit a scarf.

Better: Knitting a scarf requires a few specific tools and some patience as one masters the steps.