

# How to Write a Thesis Statement Worksheet

## WHAT IS A THESIS STATEMENT?

A thesis statement is one or two sentences, usually placed at the end of your introduction that describes the main focus of your essay. A thesis statement is essential for an academic essay. In the writing process, it is the main organising idea for your essay that helps to keep you focused and on topic. For your readers, it serves as a 'roadmap' for where you are going to take them with your essay.

## SUCCESSFUL THESIS STATEMENTS SHOULD BE:

1. **Direct (focussed):** It should tell the reader **exactly** what your paper is about in 1 or 2 sentences.
2. Is the commentary a **strong opinion** or just stating a fact? **Arguable?** Can people agree or disagree with your position?
3. **Supportable:** is there evidence to support your position?
4. Is it **specific** enough to be interesting?
  - a. **Not specific enough:** School is good.
  - b. **Specific:** Attending school regularly is the best way to become a successful communicator.
5. Is it written in present or past tense? **Writing about literature should be in present tense.**
6. Does it use first or second person? It shouldn't. **All formal expository writing MUST be in the Third Person.** She writes, They write, etc...

## Thesis statements should **not**:

**Be simply an observation.** E.g.: "There is a lot of traffic in Vancouver"

**Be the title.** E.g.: "Vancouver traffic problems"

**Ask a question.** E.g.: "What do you think about Vancouver's traffic?"

## WRITING YOUR THESIS STATEMENT:

**Step One: If you are not given a question or essay prompt, formulate a question that your essay will answer.**

- ✓ Read your material closely, review your notes and identify questions or ideas that you may want to write about.
- ✓ **Examples:**
  - How does the author use foreshadowing in this novel?
  - What purpose does mitosis serve in the lifespan of a cell?
  - What does this character's life tell us about human nature?

**Step Two: Point form answers to your question.**

- ✓ Brainstorm and write down some general points that express your ideas about possible ways to answer your question.
  - Select your best answers based on your research or knowledge of your topic.

### Step Three: Combine Steps 1 & 2

- ✓ Turn the question and your best answer(s) into a combination sentence that tells the reader what your paper is about.
  - Depending on the complexity of the topic, a thesis may be a single-point statement or it may have 3 or more points supporting it. (See the examples below)

#### Examples:

**Topic:** Should students be allowed to eat during class?

**Possible Thesis Statement:** Students should not eat during class as students would not be paying attention while they eat, they may leave trash in the classroom, and other students might be distracted while their neighbor eats.

**Topic:** Are school uniforms beneficial or not?

**Possible Thesis Statement:** School uniforms provide many benefits to students, parents and educators.

**Topic:** In this paper, I will discuss the relationship between fairy tales and early childhood.

**Possible Thesis Statement:** Not just empty stories for kids, fairy tales shed light on the psychology of young children.

### Write a thesis statement for each topic below.

1. Discuss which was the greater discovery: penicillin or electricity?
2. What was the greatest challenge in your life?
3. What are the most important character traits for a good sibling?
4. Explain why everyone should know how to drive.
5. Should motorcycles be outlawed on public streets?
6. What is the life of a typical student like?
7. Should post secondary school be free?
8. Should elementary schools ban cell phones?