

Easy Steps to a Great Thesis

A thesis statement can be:

- **The answer to a question that you have posed**
- **The solution for a problem you have identified**
- **A statement that takes a position on a debatable topic**

General Tips about Thesis Statements

- A statement that contains the essay's topic and point(s)
- Gives the reader a sense of what the essay will be about
- Usually comes at the end of the introduction
- Most thesis statements are only one sentence
- Must be a complete sentence
- Everything in the essay must support the thesis.
- Introduction paragraph should follow this format:
 - ▣ Attention getter (commonly known as a “hook”)
 - ▣ Introduce the topic
 - ▣ State the thesis

What are the Roles of a Thesis?

- 1. It can assert an argument, explain a topic, and/or analyze an issue.**
- 2. It is specific in presenting the writer's position.**
- 3. It limits both scope and topic of the paper.**
- 4. It captures the reader's interest and focuses that interest on the topic.**

Kinds of Thesis Statements: Persuasive*

- An persuasive paper makes a claim based on opinion, evaluation, or interpretation about a topic and proves this claim with specific evidence.
- **Persuasive thesis example:** High school graduates should be required to take a year off to pursue community service projects before entering college in order to increase their maturity and global awareness.

*If you have been asked to *argue a point* or *choose a side* on an issue, this is likely the type of thesis you will use.

*Typically, you will use this style of thesis in English 1C and transfer-level courses.

Source: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>

Kinds of Thesis Statements: Analytical*

- An analytical paper breaks the topic down into parts, examines each part, and determines how each part relates to the whole topic.
- **Analytical thesis example:** An analysis of the college admission process reveals one challenge facing counselors: accepting students with high test scores or students with strong extracurricular backgrounds.

*If you have been asked to *analyze* a topic, issue, or reading, this is the type of thesis you should use.

*Typically, you will use this style of thesis in English 1A and transfer level courses.

Source: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>

Kinds of Thesis Statements: Expository*

- An expository (explanatory) paper explains something to the audience.
- **Expository thesis example:** The life of the typical college student is characterized by time spent studying, attending class, and socializing with peers.

*If you have been asked to *narrate* a story or *explain* a process, this is likely the type of thesis you will use.

*Typically, you will use this style of thesis in English 67, English 68, AmLa and LERN classes.

Ways of Constructing Thesis Statements: The List (Essay Map)

- Contains essay's topic, point, and three supporting reasons
- Example: "To reduce the number of highway fatalities [topic and point], our country needs [purpose=persuasive] to enforce the national law that designates twenty-one as the legal minimum age to drink, set up check points on major holidays, and take away licenses from convicted drunk drivers [three reasons]."



Ways of Constructing Thesis Statements: The Umbrella



- Contains essay's topic, point, and alludes to reasons why the reader should believe you.
- Do not directly state the supporting reasons, but instead allude to them.
- Example: "Although thought to be humane and necessary, animal testing [topic] for medical and cosmetic purposes does not live up to its promises [point and reasons]."
- Do NOT use language like, "There are many reasons people don't like chocolate ice cream."

Thesis Don'ts

- ❑ **Announce your thesis:** “In this essay, I am going to tell you about Mt. San Antonio College and why you should go there.”
(Side note: Some instructors may encourage this type of statement, and always do what your instructor suggests.)
- ❑ **Confuse your reader:** Just make sure that the topic and point are clear.
- ❑ **Use a fact:** This doesn't allow you to prove anything because it's already factual.
- ❑ **Be vague:** Words like “good,” “bad,” “right,” and “wrong,” don't convey specific meaning.
- ❑ **Use a question:** “Don't you think animal testing is inhumane?”
 - ❑ Does not give the point of the paper.
 - ❑ Leaves it open for readers to fill in the blank.



Creating a Thesis Statement

1. Determine essay's topic (what you're talking about)

Example: Pixar's film *Up*

2. Determine what kind of paper you are writing and what kind of thesis statement you need to use: analytical, persuasive, or expository.

Example: Persuasive=It's not really a "kid" movie.

3. Determine the way you will construct your thesis: list or umbrella?

4. Put it all together!

Example: Pixar's most recent film, *Up*, should not be considered a "kid" movie because its character conflicts and main theme of loss are too complex for children to understand.

Activity: Create Thesis Statements

- Based on the topic below, create an umbrella and list thesis statement
- Make sure to include the topic, point, and possibly reason(s) in each of the statements.
- **Topic: Being a successful Mt. SAC student**
- Be prepared to share!

Possible Thesis Statements

- List: “Though Mt. SAC may offer rigorous courses, each student can be successful [topic+point] as long as they study, receive tutoring, and meet with their instructors [reasons].”
- Umbrella: “Mt. SAC can be a challenging school, but all students can be successful [topic+point].”

Directed Learning Activity

- Now complete the exercises in the directed learning activity.
- When you are done, sign-up to see a tutor on the “DLA Walk-in” list.

Contact Information:

Call 909.274.5325 for questions and/or scheduling appointments