

writing ~~Thesises~~ ~~Thesi~~ Theses ... nah, Thesi!

(Note: theses is technically correct, but much less fun.)

At this point, you have been researching your topic for a few days. Some of you are finding so much information that you cannot process all of it. Some of you are wandering from one interesting idea to another. Some of you are staring at your screen, lost.

At this point, you need a thesis statement.



WELL, I AM GLAD YOU ASKED.

What is a thesis statement?



A thesis statement is usually one sentence that makes a claim and then summarizes three points (or so) that back up your statement. A thesis serves a few purposes.

1. It informs the reader that what you're writing about is important.
2. It gives the paper structure.
3. It informs the reader what you will talk about.
4. It directly addresses the topic you're writing about or the question you've been asked to answer.
5. It is intended to persuade the reader to agree with your opinion.

Almost any essay you write, from one page to 200 pages, requires a thesis statement.

(http://canuwrite.com/essay_thesis.php, 11/3/2015)

Okay, now we all agree that you need one.



WOW, I MUST SAY, THESE ARE REALLY

EXCELLENT QUESTIONS. BUT FIRST, [WATCH THIS:](#)

*How do you write a
thesis statement?*



[illegible]

For example, this would work:

Apple technology is a far better choice for casual computer users because they communicate with each other seamlessly, updates and bug fixes are monitored by the software, and they have a stylish appearance.

On the other hand, here are some ~~theses~~ ~~theses~~ thesi (actually, theses, but whatever...) that have some obvious flaws:

If readers all agree with your thesis as they read it, it isn't very good.

The chair is an important contribution to the spread of tables around the world because they make table use more comfortable, they allow tables to be a uniform height and they create matched sets of furniture.

If readers do not know what you are arguing by reading your thesis, it isn't very good.

Computers are a great resource and they are a lot of fun to use and sometimes people use them for the wrong reasons and do bad stuff but mostly people are much better off because there are computers.

If your thesis is too broad, it isn't very good.

The history of mankind has lots of violence such as Mongolian hordes, Nazis, and serial killers.

If your thesis is too narrow, it isn't very good.

The tip of the green marker is the very best one for home-sick Sherpas to make fine, green lines on picture frames on Thursday mornings in Tibet because...

For comparison sake, and to provide more realistic examples of weak theses (fine, have it your way), here is an essay question from a college course and three levels of thesis statements:

Your history professor assigns a five-page paper in which you must...

Analyze why the North and South fought the Civil War.

What would a good thesis statement look like?

Bad:

The North and South fought the Civil War for many reasons, some of which were the same and some different.

This statement is too general and simply rephrases the prompt. It does not answer how or why their reasons differed.

Better:

While both sides fought the Civil War over the issue of slavery, the North fought for moral reasons while the South fought to preserve its own institutions.

This sentence offers a more specific and debatable answer. However, it is still too broad and insupportable. You cannot defend a claim of morality in five pages, and good research would probably not lead you to this conclusion.

Best:

While both Northerners and Southerners believed they fought against tyranny and oppression, Northerners focused on the oppression of slaves while Southerners defended their own right to self-government.

This statement is specific, clear and thoughtful. Though some might disagree with your stance, your readers will know what to expect in your paper. Now it's up to you to defend your thesis with good evidence and persuasive writing.

<https://www.evansville.edu/writingcenter/downloads/thesis.pdf>, 11/3/2015)

Bibliography

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