

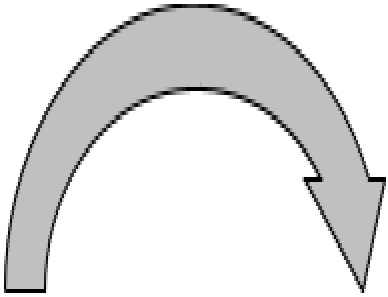
Review: Making a Thesis Evolve

What a Good Working Thesis Does

- Promotes thinking (opens, rather than closes, discussion)
- Limits the scope of your project
- Directs your discussion, helps you decide what to talk about first, next, etc.
- Contains tension: “although x, nevertheless y...”

Common Mistakes

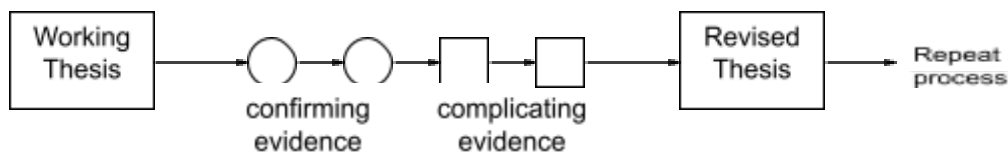
- Prejudging the outcome of your paper
- Encompassing too broad an idea that does not specifically relate to your evidence
- Speaking in abstractions
- Constructing a thesis that leads you into the same general point again and again



The Thesis as a Camera Lens

“It’s useful to think of the thesis as a camera lens that affects how we see the subject, what evidence we select, and what questions we ask about that evidence. But it’s essential to understand that the subject being viewed also affects the lens. In good analytical writing, the analysis of evidence should also focus and refocus (bring about revision of) the thesis. Even in a final draft, writers are usually fine-tuning their governing idea in response to their analysis of evidence. The relationship between thesis and subject is thus *reciprocal*” (Rosenwasser, Stephen 165)

The Evolving Thesis



Six Steps For Making a Thesis Evolve

1. Formulate an idea about your subject—a working thesis.
2. Introduce supporting evidence and clarify the connection between each piece of evidence and your working thesis.
3. Locate complicating evidence, not accounted for by your thesis.
4. Explore the mismatches between complicating evidence and your thesis, asking and answering SO WHAT?
5. Reshape your claim to accommodate the evidence that doesn’t fit.
6. Repeat steps 2, 3, 4, and 5 several times.