

Name & Date:

Objective: IELTS Writing

Developing Strong Thesis Statements Part 1

The thesis statement or main claim must be debatable

An argumentative or persuasive piece of writing must begin with a debatable thesis or claim. In other words, the thesis must be something that people could reasonably have differing opinions on. If your thesis is something that is generally agreed upon or accepted as fact then there is no reason to try to persuade people.

*Example of a **non-debatable** thesis statement:*

- Pollution is bad for the environment.

This thesis statement is not debatable. First, the word pollution means that something is bad or negative in some way. Further, everyone agrees that pollution is a problem, they simply disagree on the impact it will have or the scope of the problem. No one could reasonably argue that pollution is good.

*Example of a **debatable** thesis statement:*

- At least twenty-five percent of the federal budget should be spent on limiting pollution.

This is an example of a debatable thesis because reasonable people could disagree with it. Some people might think that this is how we should spend the nation's money. Others might feel that we should be spending more money on education. Still others could argue that corporations, not the government, should be paying to limit pollution.

*Another example of a **debatable** thesis statement:*

- America's anti-pollution efforts should focus on privately owned cars.
- In this example there is also room for disagreement between rational individuals. Some citizens might think focusing on recycling programs rather than private automobiles is the most effective strategy.

1) Write a non-debatable thesis statement about the following:

- a) Crime
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- b) War
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2) Write a debatable thesis statement about the following.

- a) Crime
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- b) War
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Source: The Writing Lab & OWL at Purdue University. Contributors - Stacy Weida, Karl Stolley.