



Thesis and Conclusions

Thesis writing may seem intimidating, but it doesn't have to be! A good thesis can actually make writing your essay way easier.

What is a thesis?

Writing a “thesis-driven essay” implies that you are making an argument, or that you're trying to prove a point. The thesis is the solid statement of the argument that your essay will make. A thesis can appear in the form of a single sentence, or in a couple sentences. It is the part of your essay that explains what you're trying to say, or the point you're trying to prove.

EXAMPLE: *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is a social commentary on racism, which points out that racism only exists in the mind.

So how do you write a thesis?

A good thesis can really make your paper awesome, but writing one is sometimes challenging. Just remember that your thesis should:

1. Explain what you're going to argue.
 - a. What are you trying to prove?
 - b. Are there specific points to your argument? If yes, then what are they?
2. Be refutable.
 - a. When someone reads your thesis, they should instantly be able to argue against it. If your thesis isn't arguable, then it's not a thesis, but a statement of fact or observation. NOT A THESIS: *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is a novel about rafting down a river.
3. Have sustenance.
 - a. A good thesis probably can't be completely explained in a single paragraph.
 - b. A strong thesis has layers of complexity that take time to explain and more importantly, prove.

Some helpful formats:

If you're having trouble creating a thesis, try these formulas to get you started:

1. (BLANK) is true because (REASON #1), (REASON #2), and (REASON #3). Each of these “reasons” then becomes a body paragraph.
2. (BLANK) is (BLANK) as is evidenced by (TEXTUAL EVIDENCE).
3. Scholars argue that (BLANK), but the (text/article, etc.) actually says (BLANK) based on (my approach to the text).

What is perhaps even more difficult than writing a thesis is writing a conclusion.

Conclusions can do a couple of things:

- Summarize the arguments.
- Restate and expand the thesis (NEVER copy and paste your thesis into the concluding paragraph).
- Explain why the argument presented is important/why the argument presented enhances our understanding of the topic.
- Add something new to the overall argument without adding another point of contention. This means that the conclusion can include new info, but not necessarily another point to be argued.

Having trouble getting started with your conclusions?

- Try starting with a restatement of your thesis, just as a foundation, and see where you go from there.
- Glance over your essay again and see what you haven't said yet. Are there any loose ends that need to be tied up?

REMEMBER!

- The conclusion does not have to be ridiculously long! You're just ending the essay, not starting a new one.
- The conclusion is not a rewrite of the entire essay.
- Conclusions don't have to be super complex. The complex part should be your thesis, or your argument.
- Think BIG PICTURE. The conclusion shouldn't focus on the finer points of your argument, but rather your argument as a whole.
- Think of it this way: the conclusion exists so that your essay doesn't abruptly end with a body paragraph. Remember the standard essay format:

- Introduction (thesis)
- Body Paragraph 1
- Body Paragraph 2
- Body Paragraph 3
- Conclusion