

Name: _____

Date: _____

Thesis Statements

A thesis is just a fancy way of making a statement of what you believe and why you believe it. When you write an essay, you **MUST** clearly state your thesis at the end of the introduction paragraph. It needs to be there. If you don't have a thesis, you don't have a quality essay. The reason you write an entire essay is to prove your thesis statement. You **NEED** to remember this.

Thesis Statement – A thesis is a direct statement that explains the topic of your essay, what you believe about that topic, and why you believe it.

A thesis statement is made up of three different parts. **Every thesis needs these three things:**

- 1) Identification (What is the topic you are talking about?)
- 2) Claim (What do you believe about the topic?)
- 3) Direction (What are the 3 main reasons you can support your claim? This will basically outline the body paragraphs of your essay.)

You will need to form these three parts into a *complete argumentative sentence*:

Identification of Topic + Claim (belief about topic) + **Direction** (reason 1, reason 2, and reason 3.)

**** Before you write your thesis, decide what you plan to argue and determine 3 DIFFERENT & GENERAL ways in which you can prove your opinion. It helps if you make a t-chart first. Sometimes it is easier to argue a certain side of an issue, and it might be smart to take the side that is easier to prove.**

EXAMPLE:

Writing Prompt: Educators often discuss whether high school sports have a positive influence on students. Some educators think high school sports do have a positive influence because the lessons learned from athletic competition add to the lessons learned in the classroom. Other educators think high school sports do not have a positive influence because the emphasis on sports often overshadows student achievement in other areas. In your opinion, do high school sports have a positive influence on students?

ID-Identify topic	Claim-What you believe	Direction-3 general reasons you believe your claim is true
Sports offered in high school	They have a positive influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Teach social skills- Teach time-management- Provide exercise and teach benefits of hard work
Thesis: High school sports unquestionably have a positive influence on high school students because they teach social skills, reinforce time-management skills, provide exercise and show the benefits of hard work.		

Guided Practice

Writing Prompt: The state of Ontario has been locked in a debate for several years as to whether the driving age should be raised from 16 to 18. Some people feel that 16-year-olds lack the responsibility and maturity to handle the significant privilege of driving. Others argue that 16-year-olds use their licenses for more than just driving to social events. In your opinion, should the driving age be raised from 16 to 18?

ID-Identify topic	Claim-What you believe	Direction-The general reason you believe your claim is true
Thesis:		

Individual Practice

Writing Prompt: Should cell phones be banned in high schools?

Thesis Statements

ID-Identify topic	Claim-What you believe	Direction-The general reason you believe your claim is true
Thesis:		

Writing a Strong Thesis Statement

Every thesis statement is an argument to be proved and supported by the body of the essay. Remember, if your essay doesn't support your thesis statement, you have two choices: change your essay or change your thesis statement.

WEAK THESIS: I learned that if I procrastinate, my essays will not come out as good.

STRONG THESIS:

Say why:

For many student writers, procrastination is based on fear; this fear keeps students from improving their writing because they do not take the time to fully develop their ideas.

Say why we should care:

Students should understand that worrying about grammar and spelling too early in the writing process will actually lead to a less analytical essay.

Say how:

English teachers often overwhelm students by giving them too many things to think about when writing essays: thesis statements, grammar, spelling, organization, audience, etc.

Make specific comparisons:

The key difference between writing in high school and writing in college is that your ideas become more important than your form. Therefore, college freshmen have to learn a new way to write.

Make an evaluation:

My high school teacher's insistence on teaching me the 5-paragraph essay has actually hurt my writing skills.

Consider the consequences:

If students do not find ways to ignore their audience at first and write "lazy or weak first drafts," they will never learn to fully develop their ideas.

Apply previous/other knowledge:

Knowing your audience is important; nevertheless, after realizing how much easier it is to write for a friend rather than a teacher, I am convinced that students should ignore their audience when writing a first draft.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF:

- Have I said something specific and meaningful? Have I used specific names, examples, dates, facts, etc., and said something about them?
- Have I said something arguable? What's the point if everyone will agree with you or if everyone already knows this?
- Can I support my thesis? Can I think of specific examples and evidence? Does every point I bring up support my thesis or do I need to revise my thesis statement?
- Is it specific enough to write about in the required number of pages? Or would someone have to write a book (or a set of encyclopedias) to fully support my thesis?
- Is my thesis relevant to the assignment? Does it do what my teacher asks (i.e. argue, summarize, compare/contrast)?
- Does it show my ability to think critically about the subject? Does it answer one or more of the 5 W's?
- Can I combine any of the above strategies to make my thesis even stronger and still answer "yes" to the above questions?

Thesis Statement Worksheet – Make them stronger!

Sample: **One should write more formally for school than for a friend.**

Revision:

1. Audience awareness is the most important part of writing.
2. It is difficult to write about topics you find boring.
3. Every reader needs to understand your points and examples.
4. Students spend most of their time thinking about grammar.
5. Not having confidence hurts your writing.