

How to Write a Thesis Statement

When we write, we need to persuade our audience of our viewpoint. This form of persuasion is referred to as your academic argument, which should follow a predictable pattern in your writing. The thesis statement forms a part of your introduction where you state the viewpoint or argument that you will be focusing on in your essay/assignment. After setting the context on your topic, you state what you aim to do in the essay. This sentence, the thesis statement serves as a summary of the argument you'll make in the rest of your paper.

A thesis statement should:

- Be concise
- Be actionable, use verbs: explore, discuss, integrate, analysis
- Tell the reader how you will address the subject matter, e.g. what your argument will be
- Explain any specific methods or resources you are using e.g. specific theories or reference to authors
- Make a claim, e.g. states the reason for your paper

Tips for writing a successful thesis statement:

- Be as clear and as specific as possible; avoid vague words.
- Indicate the point of your paper but avoid sentence structures like, "The point of my paper is..."
- It may take many drafts until you arrive at the most informative statement

Example:

Original thesis: There are serious objections to today's treatment of HIV which will be looked at in this essay.

Revised theses: Today's treatment of HIV/AIDS has more side effects than benefits. This will be discussed extensively using clinical data obtained from Groote Schuur Hospital.

In evaluating your thesis statement, ask the following questions:

- Did I tell my reader what I am about to do in my essay?
- Have I clearly stated my position on the subject?
- Is my thesis statement specific enough?
- Is my thesis statement supported by the rest of my essay?

Here are some examples of thesis statements:

- In this essay the genetic disorder, albinism will be **discussed** with reference to the social implications.
- This report will **analyse** the different types of albinism and provide recommendations to clinicians on how to effectively treat this disorder.
- We will **explain** the current treatment of HIV/AIDS in South Africa emphasising on the benefits to patients.

Adapted from: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Thesis statements. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://cssac.unc.edu/> (Accessed 11 March 2015)

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