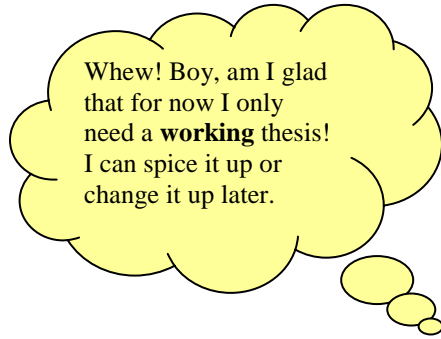


STEP 3: WRITING A THESIS



1. A thesis must
- (a) take a position
 - (b) be supportable with research readily available
 - (c) be expressed in one sentence

2. Limit your thesis by one or more of the following methods
- (a) time
 - (b) space
 - (c) causes
 - (d) effects
 - (e) comparison
 - (f) examples
 - (g) problem/analysis/solution

3. A good thesis is not general.

General Thesis Statement

Specific Thesis Statement

Crime must be stopped.

The courts need to hand out stiffer sentences.

Dickens writes good novels

Dickens uses the setting of his novels to emphasize the themes.



A THESIS STATEMENT IS A ROAD MAP FOR WRITING YOUR PAPER. WITHOUT IT, YOU CANNOT MAKE AN OUTLINE AND YOU CANNOT TAKE NOTES. YOU NEED TO KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING.

UNDERSTANDING THESIS STATEMENTS

See how a writer starts with a BIG topic and can narrow it to a thesis statement.

Subject
Topic
Research question
Thesis statement

Rain forests
The importance of rain forests
What is the importance of rain forests?
Rain forests provide the human race with many resources.
OR

Rain forests are complex living systems that contribute to the balance of life on this planet.

THESIS STATEMENT WORKSHEET

Use this worksheet to familiarize yourself with the construction of a good thesis statement. Use the tools described below which will prove that your thesis is acceptable.

Materials you will need: paper and pen

Procedure:

Step 1 – Read the following definition of a thesis statement. *A thesis statement is an opinion-based sentence that names the topic of your paper. In most cases, this sentence is the last sentence in your introduction.*

Step 2 – Write a sample thesis statement of your choice. Ask yourself, “How do I know it is a good thesis?”

Use these tools or test questions:

Is it an opinion?

Is it debatable?

Is it specific?

Step 3 – Write a belief statement about your topic. (I believe that the SAT tests should be eliminated.)

Next add a fact to the belief statement. (I believe that the SAT tests should be eliminated because they cannot predict success in college.)

Last, take yourself out by eliminating “I believe” and you are left with a thesis statement.

(SAT tests should be eliminated because they cannot predict success in college.)

Step 4 – Test the thesis using the tools/test questions in Step 2.

LOOK AT MORE EXAMPLES OF THESIS STATEMENTS PROVIDED ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE.

EXAMPLES

A good thesis is not too narrow.

Narrow Thesis Statement

Hemingway's war stories are very good.

Drug addiction is a big problem.

_____ had an unhappy childhood.

Broader Thesis Statement

Hemingway's war stories helped create a new prose style.

Drug addiction has caused a huge increase in violent crimes.

One can see the impact of his/her life experiences in the novels (poetry, short stories) of _____.

EXAMPLES

A thesis statement is not a title.

Titles

The Decline of Baseball

Home and Schools

Not Titles

In recent years, baseball has experienced a decline in popularity.

Parents need to participate more in the education of their children.

EXAMPLES

A thesis statement is not an announcement.

Announcement

I want to share some thoughts with you about the space program.

The thesis of this paper is the difficulty of solving America's environmental problems.

Not an Announcement

The space program is a waste of money.

Solving America's environmental problems is more difficult than many environmentalists believe.

EXAMPLES

A thesis statement is not a statement of absolute fact.

Jane Austen is the author of Pride and Prejudice. (This statement cannot be argued, not a good thesis)

Suicide is the deliberate taking of one's own life. (This cannot be argued, not a good thesis)

President Lincoln was shot at Ford's Theater. (This cannot be argued, not a good thesis)