

A Writing Center Helpful Handout

THESIS STATEMENT

A thesis is: a one-sentence summary of a paper's content.

To get an effective thesis you need to limit your subject and your claims about it. There are two ways to achieve this:

1. Begin with a working Thesis:

It's OK if you don't have a clear thesis in mind before you start writing your paper. A working thesis is a hypothesis of sorts, a well informed hunch about your topic and the claim you are going to make. Once your first draft is finished go over your thesis again and see if it works well for your paper. It's ok to change your mind.

2. Begin with a subject and narrow it:

- Select a broad area of interest and make yourself knowledgeable about it's general figures.
- Limit this subject to a manageable scope, ask questions. Who? What aspects? Where? When? How? Answering these question will yield several possible topics for an essay.

3. Make an assertion:

- What do you have to say about this?
- Make several assertions about your topic to give yourself a choice of working thesis statements.

Different kinds of Thesis statements:

Explanatory Thesis: Developed in response to short answer exam questions that call for information not analysis.

Explanatory and Slightly Argumentative Thesis: Developed for organizing reports as well as essays that call for some analysis.

Strongly Argumentative Thesis: Developed to organize papers and exam questions that call for information, analysis and the writer's forcefully stated point of view.

*Information compiled from *Writing and Reading across the Curriculum* and *Hodge's Harbrace Handbook*.