

# A Guide for Constructing a Thesis Statement

## What is a thesis statement?

A sentence (or sentences) that expresses the main ideas of your paper and answers the question(s) posed by your paper. The thesis will offer readers a quick and easy to follow summary of what the paper will be discussing and what you as a writer are setting out to tell them. The kind of thesis that your paper will have will depend on the purpose of your writing.

## 6 Tips

1. A thesis statement is an assertion, not a statement of fact or an observation.

- **Fact/Observation:** People use many lawn chemicals.
- **Thesis:** People are poisoning the environment with chemicals merely to keep their lawns clean.

2. A thesis takes a stand rather than announcing a subject.

- **Announcement:** The thesis of this paper is the difficulty of solving our environmental problems.
- **Thesis:** Solving our environmental problems is more difficult than many environmentalists believe.

3. A thesis is the main idea, not the title. It must be a complete sentence that explains in some detail what you expect to write about.

- **Title:** Social Security and Old Age.
- **Thesis:** Continuing changes in the Social Security System makes it almost impossible to plan intelligently for one's retirement.

4. A thesis statement is narrow, rather than broad. If the thesis statement is sufficiently narrow, it can be fully supported.

- **Broad:** The American steel industry has many problems.
- **Narrow:** The primary problem if the American steel industry is the lack of funds to renovate outdated plants and equipment.

**5. A thesis statement is specific rather than vague or general.**

- **Vague:** Hemingway's war stories are very good.
- **Specific:** Hemingway's stories helped create a new prose style by employing extensive dialogue, shorter sentences, and strong Anglo-Saxon words.

**6. A thesis statement has one main point rather than several. More than one point may be too difficult for a reader to understand and the writer to support.**

- **More than one point:** Stephen Hawking's physical disability has not prevented him from becoming a world-renowned physicist, and his book is the subject of a movie.
- **One main point:** Stephen Hawking's physical disability has not prevented him from becoming a world renowned physicist.

## **References**

Handout, Brooklyn College, [http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/web/aca\\_facultywac/MiniLessons-ThesisStatements-TextualAnalysis.pdf](http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/web/aca_facultywac/MiniLessons-ThesisStatements-TextualAnalysis.pdf)