

Thesis Statements and Research

Steps and Tips for Effective Essay Writing

Before you start writing, ask yourself these questions:

What exactly is a thesis statement?

A: A thesis statement is a strong statement that you can prove with **evidence**. It should be a product of your own critical thinking **after** you have done some research. It will be the main idea of your entire project, and can also be thought of as an angle or point of view from which you will present your material.

When do I write a thesis statement?

You will develop a thesis statement after you have written a **statement of purpose**. A statement of purpose announces the purpose, scope and direction of your paper. For example, "My paper will examine how diabetes manifests in younger children," or "The aim of this paper is to examine what chemical compounds make up Windex." A purpose statement makes a promise to the reader about the development of the argument but does not preview the particular conclusions that the writer has drawn.

Sample Purpose and Thesis Statement

"The goal of this paper is to examine the effects of Chile's agrarian reform on the lives of rural peasants. The nature of the topic dictates the use of both a chronological and comparative analysis of peasant lives at various points during the reform period... **The Chilean reform example provides evidence that land distribution is an essential component of both the improvement of peasant conditions and the development of a democratic society. More extensive and enduring reforms would likely have allowed Chile the opportunity to further expand these horizons.**

Bold = thesis statements

Not bold = statement of purpose

How do I write a thesis statement?

1. Look at your statement of purpose.
2. Look at the kinds of information you have been finding in your research.
3. Decide what kind of statement you have enough evidence to prove.

4. Write that as your thesis statement.

Remember: YOU MUST ALWAYS BE ABLE TO SUPPORT YOUR THESIS WITH STRONG EVIDENCE FROM RELIABLE SOURCES.

Here are some ways to start guiding research and thinking about your thesis

1. Define a problem and state your opinion about it (this is easier after you have done research and have enough evidence to support your opinion.)
2. Discuss the current state of an issue or problem and predict how it might resolve.
3. Put forth a possible solution to a problem.
4. Look at an issue/topic from a new, interesting perspective
5. Theorize about how the world might be different today if something had/had not happened in the past
6. Compare two or more of something similar and give your rating about them (cars, authors, computers, colleges, books, etc.)
7. Put out your ideas about how something was influenced to be the way it is or was (music, art, political leadership, genocide.)

What does it look like? Here's some examples.

Statement of Purpose	Possible Thesis Statement
"I want to learn about what has influenced the music of 50 Cent."	The music of 50 Cent has been heavily influenced by (you fill in the blank.)
"I want to find out some ways to stop teen gang activity."	Teen gang activity in Canada can be stopped by a combined approach which consists of supervised youth programs, more job availability, and closer family relationships.
"I want to know how close we are to a cure for AIDS."	Although much research has gone into finding a cure for the AIDS virus, we are no closer to a real cure than we were when the disease first became known.
"I want to know why Christians and Muslims fought so hard with each other during the Middle Ages."	Even though Christians and Muslims were supposedly fighting for religious dominance in the medieval world, their motives were strongly affected by the desire for land and economic power.