

Thesis Statement

A thesis statement in an essay is a sentence that explicitly identifies the purpose of the paper or previews its main ideas.

A thesis statement has the following properties:

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

Fact or observation: In the past six months, ten deaths from E.coli poisoning have occurred in this country.

Thesis: The federal government's inability to pass and enforce laws concerning sanitation and inspection of meat processing plants is the biggest contributor to the increase in deaths from E. coli.

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

Announcement: This paper presents business managers and supervisors' attitudes toward grammar and punctuation errors in business documents.

Thesis: Correctness in grammar and punctuation should be enforced in business and technical documents because their negative effects on business audiences and the expense of miscommunication.

3. A thesis statement is the main idea, not the title

Title: Security in high schools

Thesis: To avoid another tragedy like the Columbine school shooting in 1999, school districts must increase security in schools at the entrances, in the classrooms, and in congregating areas.

4. A thesis statement is narrow, rather than broad

Broad: The European school system is much better than the United States' school system.

Narrow: France's additional year of secondary school and its system of internships assures that students are more prepared for college and the job market than high school students are in the United States.

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

Vague: Plagiarism can have bad effects.

Specific: Plagiarism of college papers can negatively affect students' grades, their ethical growth, and the rigor of the university itself.

6. A thesis statement has one main point, rather than many main points

More than one main point: Steven 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: Steven Hawking's physical disability has not prevented him from becoming a world-renowned physicist.

- *When you begin your paper, you should have a "working thesis statement," or a rough and very basic thesis statement. A thesis statement can be revised and polished during the course of writing the paper.*
- *Writers often discover they have something different to say than they originally intended. If that happens, change the thesis to match your new direction. It is important, however, that the new thesis statement still fits the above guidelines.*