

Thesis Statements

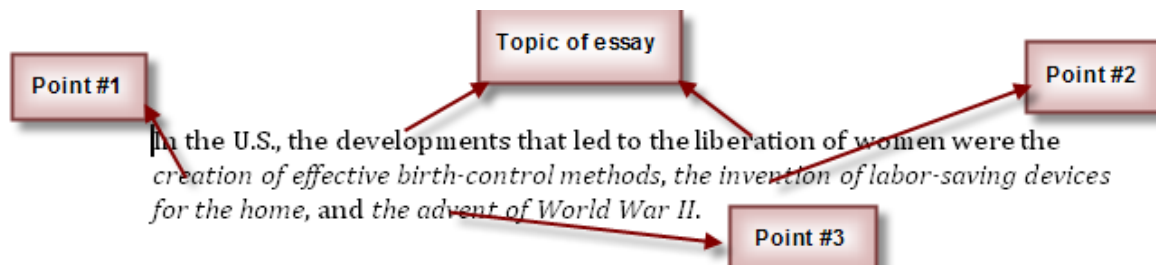
What a thesis statement is

A thesis statement is one or more sentences, usually in the first paragraph, stating the topic of the essay or paper and the writer's main point about that topic. It is also the reader's guide to the information that follows.

Here's a sample thesis statement:

In the U.S., the developments that led to the liberation of women were the *creation of effective birth-control methods, the invention of labor-saving devices for the home, and the advent of World War II.*

The diagram below shows the parts of this thesis statement and demonstrates how a thesis can guide the organization of the writer and the expectations of the reader.



From this thesis statement, the reader can expect the writer to develop the topic by thoroughly discussing each of the three points that were listed in the thesis and explaining how each led to the liberation of women.

What a thesis statement is not

- A thesis is not a statement of fact.

Qatar is a country on the Arabian Gulf.

- A thesis is not a vague statement of the topic.

This essay will discuss globalization.

- A thesis is not a question.

Should restaurants ban smoking?

What a thesis statement can do

A thesis may be simple or detailed, but it can often indicate a pattern of organization or supporting details.

Compare/Contrast

- Simple: *Community service and academic classes educate students **in different ways**.*
Detailed: *Community service activities develop **social and emotional skills** of students while academic classes develop **intellectual skills**.*

Argument

- Simple: *Public schools should require students to wear uniforms **for several reasons**.*
Detailed: *Public schools should require students to wear uniforms **because they save parents money, de-emphasize fashion, and create school spirit**.*

Cause and Effect

- Simple: *The large movement of people from rural to urban areas has **several serious effects**.*
Detailed: *The large movement of people from rural to urban areas has major effects **on a city's ability to provide housing, employment, and adequate sanitation services**.*

Drafting and refining your thesis

Planning your writing project

Using the following template may help you get started on your writing project:

Template: *In this essay, I plan to (argue, defend, explain, demonstrate, analyze) that _____ because (1)_____, (2)_____, and (3)_____.*

Example: *In this essay, I plan to **demonstrate that** the liberation of women in the United States occurred **because (1)** effective birth control methods were created that allowed women to plan child-bearing, **(2)** labor-saving devices were invented for the home which gave women more free time and **(3)** the beginning of World War II required more women to join the work force.*

Refining your thesis statement

After working on the paper and building an introduction, the thesis can always be reworded, or refined.

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Adapted from Alice Oshima and Ann Hogue, *Writing Academic English*, 3rd ed.
(White Plains: Addison Wesley Longman, 1999), 131 and TAMU University Writing Center handouts