

Tips for Writing a Thesis

Aim to write a thesis that . . .

- *Makes an argument.*

The thesis is not a place for a statement of the obvious; it is a place for you to declare your stance boldly so that your reader knows what you are going to argue. A timid, self-evident thesis is weak and unappealing.
- *Is the driving force behind the entire paper.*

Everything revolves around the thesis. Everything. Work toward a strong and compelling thesis that lends interest to your introduction, drives the body of your argument forward, and suggests fascinating implications in your conclusion.
- *Has a narrow and specific focus.*

Formulate a thesis that can be reasonably argued according to the length of your paper. If your thesis is too broad, your argument will be overwhelming to make in the allotted space; if it is too narrow, you will struggle to provide sufficient evidence and analysis.
- *Addresses the assignment.*

Carefully reread the assignment prompt to ensure that your thesis is addressing what it should. No matter how excellent it may be, a thesis that does not respond to the prompt will result in a paper that is outside of the assigned parameters.

Try to avoid writing a thesis that . . .

- *Attempts to establish all of the important background information.*

If you have a good introduction, important background information and the parameters for your paper's focus should already have been introduced. Your thesis can then be concise, focused, and memorable.
- *Is wordy and cumbersome.*

Cut out all of the superfluous words, so that your reader can understand exactly what you are arguing and can easily remember it while reading the rest of the paper.
- *Makes a statement of fact.*

If your thesis proposes an uncontested fact, it is not a thesis—it is a statement of the obvious. You cannot make an argument if you are merely stating an accepted piece of information.

- *Uses vague, general terms.*

Imprecise wording in your thesis can leave your entire paper open to misinterpretation. Choose language that is unambiguous and appropriate to your discipline so that your reader has no question about what you are trying to say.