

Handout Thesis Statement

Definition:

A thesis statement is a short statement, usually one sentence, that summarizes the main point or claim of an essay, research paper, etc., and is developed, supported, and explained in the text by means of examples and evidence.

Source: www.dictionary.com/browse/thesis-statement

The thesis statement is a one or two sentence encapsulation of your paper's main point, main idea, or main message. Your paper's thesis statement will be addressed and defended in the body paragraphs and the conclusion.

Source: www.lonestar.edu/departments/tutoring/Thesis_Statement.pdf

[A thesis statement] is a single sentence that formulates both your topic and your point of view. In a sense, the thesis statement is your answer to the central question or problem you have raised. Writing this statement will enable you to see where you are heading and to remain on a productive path as you plan and write. Try out different possibilities until you find a statement that seems right for your purpose. Moreover, since the experience of writing may well alter your original plans, do not hesitate to revise the thesis statement as you write the page.

MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 42

Examples

1) a. In this paper, I will discuss whether fast food is bad for children's health. **vs.**

b. In a case study of three TV commercials, this paper assesses how the market industry conceals how fast food causes serious harm to children's health.

2) a. Hollywood movies depict stereotypical gender roles. **vs.**

b. In a comparison of the movies *Juno* and *Precious*, this paper reveals how contemporary "Coming-of-Age- Movies" subvert stereotypical gender roles

3) a. Laurie Penny's *Meat Market. Female Flesh Under Capitalism* is a feminist book.

This statement, although it does state something, does not provide the reader with specific reasons why Penny's book can be read as feminist or what feminist statements the author makes. **vs.**

b. Laurie Penny's *Meat Market. Female Flesh Under Capitalism* can be read as a feminist book, disclosing women's struggles in a neo-liberal age.

This statement hints at the theoretical context that the paper will assess and it gives an idea on the specific perspective that the author pursues: With a feminist reading of the text, he/she will focus on the problematic of neo-liberalism and the specific burdens it creates for women.

4) a. Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is a play about a young man who seeks revenge.

That does not say anything – it is basically just a summary and hardly debatable. **vs.**

b. Hamlet experiences conflicting feelings because he is in love with his mother.

Things you should do when composing a thesis statement:

Your thesis should indicate your *original point, idea, or argument*.

A thesis should be *one or two quality sentences*.

Write a thesis that is *specific, not general*.

Clarity for the reader should be important when writing a thesis statement.

Your thesis should include your *position* on the topic

Your thesis statement must be *debatable*

Finally, you should realize that your initial thesis statement is *subject to change*! The more research you do and the more you revise your paper, the more you will mold a thesis statement that will succinctly describe what your final draft proposes to argue.