

# WRITING A THESIS STATEMENT

## What is a thesis statement?

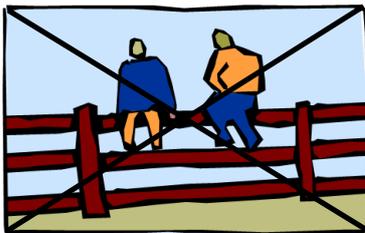
A thesis statement is a position you will argue in your essay/thesis/dissertation. This central statement helps frame the rest of your writing.

## Why do you write a thesis statement?

A thesis statement requires you to take a position. This means you do not 'sit on the fence'. You must be clear in your argument.

A good thesis statement:

- is debatable, meaning it must be possible to present a case for and against the statement made (but you argue for one side),
- limits the scope of your essay, and
- can be supported by academic literature.



### Example

*In Australia, everyone who finishes year 12 should go to university. — position*

*There are advantages and disadvantages to going to university. — 'fence sitting' i.e. not stating a position.*

## Where is the thesis statement placed?

Your thesis statement is placed in the introduction, after an opening sentence, identifying a problem and giving a brief background.

Following the thesis statement you outline what is to come in the essay. By having the outline after the thesis statement, you can use it to support your claim. However, some disciplines prefer the thesis statement to be at the end of the introduction. You should always check with your tutor.

### Example

Thesis statement:

*With growing demands to meet student needs, face-to-face lectures will be non-existent in Australian universities by 2030.*

Outline / support for claim:

This inevitable demand for lectures to be uploaded online is due to increased cost of campus parking, a growing number of online students, more international students wanting to be able to replay content, students with special needs requiring easier access or captions, and students in general wanting flexible viewing time.

A **thesis statement** can be a little longer to include some of the content of the argument to explain why that is your position. However, it should be quite succinct.

The **outline** you write in the introduction should reflect the structure of your essay paragraphs. Each paragraph should make a new point that builds on your main argument in your thesis statement.

## How do you write a thesis statement?

- 1) Begin by highlighting the keywords in the essay question and brainstorming ideas and views.
- 2) Ask yourself — “what is the main point I want to make?”
- 3) Write your position in plain English.
- 4) Keep rewriting it until it has a strong academic tone and clear perspective.
- 5) Ask yourself — “is the evidence I have provided strong enough to convince the reader of my point?”

It is good to start with a provisional thesis statement and then refine it once you have written more of your essay and built your argument. However, you should always have a clear position before you begin writing.

Your thesis statement will evolve as you:

- read more sources and gain new insights,
- gather more evidence,
- analyse and brainstorm ideas,
- critique and write, and
- edit and proofread.

### TIP

You need to rephrase your thesis statement to include it in your conclusion. This helps to reinforce your central argument. Using synonyms and restructuring a sentence can help with this.

### TIP

Use keywords from the essay question in your thesis statement to ensure you are answering the question directly.

## What is a counter argument?

A counter argument is the opposing view of the position you have taken in your essay. In your essay, you will be expected to argue for one position. However, it is also important to mention any counter arguments and then refute them immediately in the following sentence.

This does not go in the thesis statement. It could be in your next paragraph, mentioned briefly in each paragraph as you make new points or as a paragraph before the conclusion when you discuss the future of your topic. You should plan this in your essay structure before writing.

### TIP

Not all academic essays will be argumentative essays. Some may require you to describe something. In descriptive essays you may not be required to state your position. Always read your assessment outlines carefully and check with your tutor if you are unsure.

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