

Thesis Workshop

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What is a Thesis?

A thesis statement is the cornerstone of your paper. It serves as a roadmap for your argument and should reflect the points you plan to make throughout your essay. The importance of having this vital statement are twofold: **1)** it makes your paper easier to follow. By having a thesis and other organizational elements such as topic sentences, your paper can easily be organized in a clear and logical manner, and this goes a long way toward having a concise, informative essay. **2)** The thesis serves as a roadmap to you as well as your reader. It is easy to get sidetracked while writing, and having a thesis that you follow like a roadmap helps to keep you on point.

Evaluating a Thesis Statement:

A thesis statement should possess these qualities: **Debatable, Focused, and Insightful**. Using these terms, you can evaluate a thesis statement based on a scale like the one below this sentence.

Debatable _____	Factual	(Position)
Focused _____	Broad/Vague	(Specifics)
Insightful _____	Boring	('So What?')

Note: The line in the middle is the thesis statement 'sweet spot.'

How to Get Started Writing a Thesis Statement

First you have to figure out the question that you are answering:-- "Why is The Walking Dead so popular?"

Then you can start: A thesis generally has three parts: a *positon*, *specifics*, and a *'so what?'*

- 1. Position:** Answers that investigative question
"Audiences are captivated by The Walking Dead..."
- 2. Specifics:** A roadmap of how and why you will argue that position
"...because of its variety of characters, relatability, and compelling set design;..."
- 3. So What?:** Why should the reader care? What are the broader implications of this argument?
"...these factors are important because they reflect the developing relationship between the everyman and modern media."



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Exercise 1: Evaluating a Thesis

Refer to the graphic on the previous page and evaluate where on each scale the example thesis statements fall. Based on this, determine ways that the thesis could be improved (or not).

1. Life as a college student is tough because there is money-risk involved, there is a lot of pressure and expectation, and many students work part-time jobs on top of their education.

2. Cats are better than dogs

3. Many people assert that Shakespeare is the greatest writer that ever lived

4. The sky is blue

5. It is best to not have any distractions when reading

6. Native American languages are important to their culture, spirituality and, in many ways, the survival of the languages is vital to the survival of the people.

Exercise 2: One-Word Thesis Building

Your groups will be assigned a word from which you will build a thesis. Discuss how you can create a thesis about this one word. Come up with a solid thesis that has a position, specifics, answers a 'so what?' query, AND is specific, debatable, and interesting

