

# THESIS STATEMENT

## MINI-LESSON

**Copy down only what is underlined.**

WHAT IS A THESIS  
STATEMENT???

A thesis statement is a sentence that clearly identifies the purpose of the paper or previews its main ideas.

A thesis statement:

- presents opinions/thoughts on a subject/issue
- must contain a subject + an opinion
- Answers the topic question (one you created or one presented to you by your teacher)

# RULES AND EXAMPLES

1) A thesis statement is a claim, not a statement of fact or an observation.

**Fact or observation:** People use many lawn chemicals.

**Thesis statement:** People are poisoning the environment with chemicals merely to keep their lawns clean.

# REMEMBER THIS!!!!!!

A thesis statement should never contain the following:

- in my opinion
- I think
- I believe

THE ENTIRE THESIS STATEMENT ALREADY REPRESENTS WHAT YOU BELIEVE

2)A thesis statement is the main idea, not the title. It must be a complete sentence that explains in some detail what you expect to write about.

**Title:** Social Security and Old Age.

**Thesis:** Continuing changes in the Social Security System makes it almost impossible to plan intelligently for one's retirement.

3) A thesis statement is narrow rather than broad. If the thesis statement is sufficiently narrow, it can be fully supported.

**Broad:** The American steel industry has many problems.

**Narrow:** The primary problem of the American steel industry is the lack of funds to renovate outdated plants and equipment.

4) A thesis statement is specific rather than vague or general.

**Vague:** Hemingway's war stories are very good.

**Specific:** Hemingway's stories helped create a new prose style by employing extensive dialogue, shorter sentences, and strong words.

5) A good thesis statement is short and simple: it should be no longer than ONE sentence, regardless of essay length.

**Too Long:** In a world full of success gurus and books about success, it becomes ever so more important to delineate the one trait that ultimately determines success: doing the right things consistently.

**Just Right:** Success is a result of doing the right things consistently.

## WHAT IF I CHANGE MY MIND WHILE WRITING??

You can revise your thesis statement at any point during your writing process! Writers often discover what their true purpose of their essay in the process of putting their thoughts into words and then reading what they've written.

# LETS PRACTICE...

Writing Prompt: Explain how television commercials influence children.

**Bad thesis statement:** Television commercials have an influence on children.

Good thesis statement:

Most children watch television daily, so if children watch violent commercials about video games or movies, there is potential for that child to be exposed to violence at an early age.

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Writing Prompt: Explain the benefits of playing team sports.

**Bad thesis:** Playing team sports has benefits.

**Good thesis:** Playing team sports allows children to grow up learning how to work with others, take responsibility for their own actions, and allows for children to learn the importance of creating and maintaining friendships.

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WRITING PROMPT: SHOULD THE AMOUNT OF  
HOURS STUDENTS ATTEND SCHOOL BE SHORTENED?

**Bad thesis:** The amount of  
hours students attend school  
should be shortened.

How can you make this  
thesis statement awesome??!

Write the **BAD** thesis in  
your notebook as well as  
your awesome, revised  
thesis!

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WRITING PROMPT: ANALYZE WHAT PRESIDENT  
KENNEDY MEANT WHEN HE SAID, "ASK NOT  
WHAT  
YOUR COUNTRY CAN DO FOR YOU; ASK WHAT YOU  
CAN DO FOR YOUR COUNTRY."

### Bad Thesis Statement:

President Kennedy meant many things when he said "Ask not for your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country."

How can you make this  
thesis statement awesome??!

Write the **BAD** thesis in  
your notebook as well as  
your awesome, revised  
thesis!

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# PRACTICE!

You will turn a weak statement into a strong statement.

Copy the poor statement in your notebook & rewrite a strong thesis statement underneath.

**Writing Prompt: Evaluate this statement—“Everyone should learn to play a musical instrument.”**

**Poor: Learning to play a musical instrument has both good and bad points.**

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PRACTICE!

Copy the poor statement in your notebook & rewrite a strong thesis statement underneath.

**Writing Prompt: Explain why young people especially enjoy hobbies.**

**Poor: One hobby many young people especially enjoy is reading**

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PRACTICE!

**Writing Prompt:** Write about the importance of doing something you love.

**Poor:** Doing something you love is important.

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# PRACTICE

Write an essay about something you have learned recently and how it affected you.

Poor: I have learned a lot recently.

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