

A large, stylized sunburst graphic with multiple rays emanating from a central point, set against a light yellow background. The sunburst is centered behind a white rectangular box containing text.

Writing a Good Thesis

Tips to make your paper successful
from the beginning

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Basics

- Thesis - a proposition stated or put forward for consideration, esp. one to be discussed and proved or to be maintained against objections: He vigorously defended his thesis on the causes of war.

- Your thesis statement is the central argument of your essay. It must be concise and well-written.
- Your thesis goes in the introductory paragraph. Don't hide it; make it clearly asserted at the beginning of your paper.
- Your thesis must make an argument. It is the road map to the argument you will subsequently develop in your paper.

Thesis statements must make a claim or argument.

- They are not statements of fact.
- Statement of fact: "A candidates ability to afford television advertising can have an impact on the outcome of Congressional elections." This is essentially an indisputable point and therefore, not a thesis statement.
- Similarly, the claim "The United Nations was established to promote diplomacy between major powers." is not likely to inspire much debate.

Thesis statements are not merely opinion statements.

- Statement of opinion: "Congressional elections are simply the result of who has the most money." This statement does make a claim, but in this format it is too much of an opinion and not enough of an argument.
- Similarly, "The United Nations is incapable of preventing war" is closer to a thesis statement than the factual statement above because it raises a point that is debatable. But in this format, it doesn't offer the reader much information and could not be supported by evidence

Tips

- Theses do not have to be long
- They must be crystal clear
- The thesis tells what you believe, the rest of the paper defends the statement
- Your thesis must be arguable. Can you argue the complete opposite opinion?

What it means to you

- Your paper must have a good thesis or the rest of the paper probably will turn out badly
- While it does not have to be in the first sentence, it is a good idea on the length of this assignment
- I must be able to understand exactly what you are arguing for within your thesis. If I don't know what you are arguing, it is not a good thesis.

Good Thesis Statements

- "The ability to purchase television advertising is essential for any candidate's bid for election to the Senate because television reaches millions of people and thus has the ability to dramatically increase name recognition."
- "The organizational structure of the United Nations, namely consensus voting in the security council, makes it incapable of preventing war between major powers."

Road Map Sentence

- While this could be connected with your thesis, a good roadmap sentence tells the reader where the paper is going.
- On this paper, it would be intelligent to have at least three or four easily identifiable points to support your thesis