

# Using Thesis Statements

*What is a thesis statement?*

A thesis statement is a brief statement that:

- Makes a promise about the scope, purpose, and direction of the paper
- Provides a main idea or overall focus of the paper
- Is specific enough to be developed within the paper
- Suggests a structure for the paper

*For the writer, the thesis...*

- ⇒ **Serves as a planning tool**
- ⇒ **Helps to determine and clarify the focus of the paper**
- ⇒ **Becomes a reference point for all topic sentences in support of the argument**
- ⇒ **Anticipates questions about the topic**

*For the reader, the thesis...*

- ⇒ **Serves as a map**
- ⇒ **Keeps the reader focused on the argument**
- ⇒ **Engages the reader in the argument**
- ⇒ **Offers enough detail for the reader to grasp the argument**

*Working Thesis*

*vs.*

*Final Thesis*

⇒ **Working Thesis**

A working thesis guides the writer's investigation into the subject and suggests questions, problems, and strategies. It is useful in early drafts.

⇒ **Final Thesis**

A final thesis should be present in the final draft. It generally comes late in the writing process, and it is the result of revisions made to the working thesis.

*Topic vs. Thesis*

*For example...*

⇒ **Topic**

A *topic* introduces the subject of an essay.

- *A key issue in America today is wealth and poverty.*

⇒ **Argument**

An *argument* takes the topic further by taking a stand and giving reasons for the stance.

- *Through hard work, millions of Americans who were born poor have achieved prosperity for themselves and their families; today, America is an economically mobile country.*