

### Definition:

A **thesis statement** is a sentence that:

- makes a promise about the scope, purpose, and direction of the paper.
- captures the whole argument in one sentence, usually near the end of the introduction.
- is focused and specific enough to be proven within the paper.
- provides a *framework* for the paper.

### Working and Final Theses:

There is an important distinction between a **working** and a **final** thesis.

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

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.



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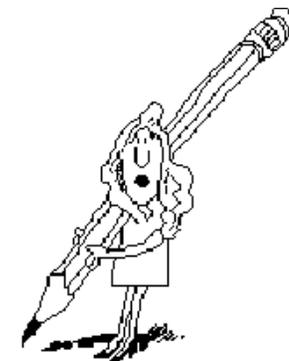
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## Thesis

Mini-Lesson  
#29



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## What does a thesis do?:

### For the *writer*, the working thesis statement:

- serves as a planning tool.
- helps the writer determine the paper's focus.
- becomes a reference point for all topic sentences in support of the argument.

- anticipates questions about the topic.

### For the *reader*, the thesis statement:

- serves as a "map" to follow through the paper.
- keeps the reader focused on the argument.
- engages the reader in the argument.
- offers enough detail for the reader to grasp the argument.

## Topic -vs.- Argument:

A **topic** introduces the subject of an essay. An **argument** takes the topic further by taking a stand and giving reasons for the stance. Here is an example:

*A key issue in America today is wealth and poverty.* ☞ This is a topic. Here are two better ways to state an argument about this topic:

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.

Once we tried to help poor Americans; today, though we are richer than ever before, we blame the poor for their poverty and enact policies that will keep them poor.

## Thesis Worksheet:

In one word, what is the topic of your paper? \_\_\_\_\_

Which aspect(s) of this topic are you going to talk about? Be specific.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What are you going to prove about this topic? What is your argument?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How can your argument be proven? Convince your reader that your argument is sound, using solid evidence.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

At this point, you know your topic, your argument, and your evidence for your argument. Put your argument with your evidence, and this will serve as your working thesis.

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