

Writing Thesis Statements

An Interactive Activity to Develop
Effective Writing Skills

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

- Given the definition and components of a thesis statement, along with a sample writing prompt with pre-written thesis statements, students will be able to distinguish the better of three thesis statements by correctly identifying it.



ASK YOURSELF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS



- When you read a passage, how much of it do you have to read to understand the topic or purpose?
- What is the purpose of writing an essay?

THESIS STATEMENTS:

You will see
this on a
test next
week!



- Give direction to the author of a paper
- Give readers an idea as to what the paper will be about



**Where am I
going?**

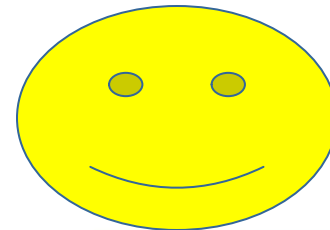


ESSAY

An essay without
a thesis statement is
like a car without a
driver

WHAT IS A THESIS STATEMENT?

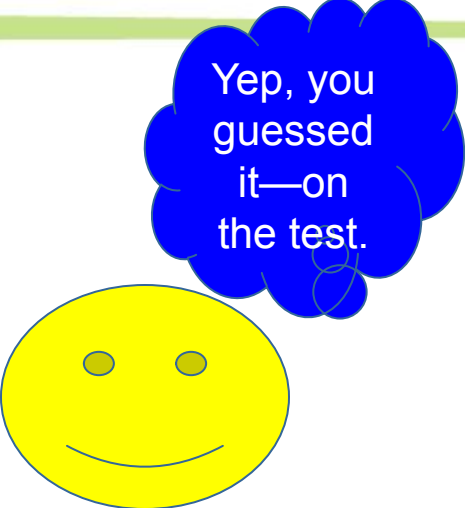
- A thesis statement is a sentence used in an essay that serves as the guide for the essay and directly answers the question or task asked of you.
- A thesis statement express the main idea of your paper.



This will be on the test, too!

WHAT IS A THESIS NOT?

- A factual statement
- A topic sentence



Yep, you guessed it—on the test.

TOPIC SENTENCE:

Big Spring is a small town in West Texas.

(This is factual, topic sentence; therefore, it is not a thesis statement.)

CHARACTERISTICS OF A THESIS STATEMENT

- Addresses the prompt clearly
- Makes a claim, or
- Presents an argument
- Is arguable (an opinion)
- In first paragraph of essay





It's time to spot a thesis!

On each of the following slides,
read the writing prompt and the two
sample statements.

Click on the one that is the best
choice for a **thesis**.

1. Early on in life, people develop an admiration for heroes. In a well-developed essay, discuss a person you admire and why you chose this person.

Option A

One person I admire is Babe Ruth, who played baseball from 1914 until 1935.

Option B

One person I admire is Babe Ruth, the greatest baseball player of all time.

Incorrect

Option A

One person I admire is Babe Ruth, who played baseball from 1914 until 1935.

Although this does address the writing prompt, this is a factual statement. **A thesis statement should be something you can argue for or against.**



Correct! Great Job!

Option B

One person I admire is Babe Ruth, the greatest baseball player of all time.

This statement addresses the prompt, and presents an opinion that can be argued.

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2. ...Discuss the social, political and economic effects of World War II on the United States.

Option A

World War II was a costly war that had a major impact on the economy of the United States

Option B

World War II not only affected the economy of the United States, but also altered the role of the American government and the American people forever.

Incorrect

Option A

World War II was a **costly** war that had a major **impact on the economy** of the United States

Although this meets all the criteria for a thesis statement, it only addresses part of the writing prompt. Remember, the statement tells the reader what to expect. With this as a thesis, one would only expect to read about the economic effects.



Correct Again!!!!

Option B

World War II not only **affected** the **economy** of the United States, but also altered the role of the American **government** and the American **people** forever.

This is correct because it addresses the social, economic and political effects as stated in the prompt. Notice that the words people (social) and government (political) were used in this statement. This makes the sentence more original and shows the reader that you know what “social” and “political” refer to.

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3. ... Describe three physical features of Latin America and their importance to the region.

Option A

The Andes Mountains, the Amazon River and Yucatan Peninsula are the three most significant physical features in Latin America.

Option B

Three physical features found in Latin America are the Andes Mountains, the Amazon River and the Yucatan Peninsula.

Correct! You are getting this!

Option A

The Andes Mountains, the Amazon River and Yucatan Peninsula are the **three most significant** physical features in Latin America.

This statement gives an argument, it presents the three physical features asked for in the prompt, and makes reference to the importance (significance)

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Almost! But not quite.

Option B

Three physical features found in Latin America are the Andes Mountains, the Amazon River and the Yucatan Peninsula, **which are all vital to the region.**

This is a topic sentence. The reason it is not a good thesis is because it does not present an argument or address the whole prompt. It is a factual statement. To make it a strong thesis, you must add to it.



4. Discuss the effect of climate and the vegetation on Sub-Saharan Africa. Be sure to discuss the factors contributing to climate, and the impact human activity has on the vegetation.

Option A

Human activity is altering the the vegetation of Sub-Saharan Africa and causing desertification, which will have devastating effects on the people of the region.

Option B

Even though the climate and vegetation of Sub-Saharan Africa varies as a result of latitude and human activity, they are still the two most important factors in determining the quality of life.

This one is tricky!

Option A

Human activity is altering the the vegetation of Sub-Saharan Africa and causing desertification, which will have devastating effects on the people of the region.

This one would be perfect for a thesis, there is only one thing wrong with it. It does not address all of the writing prompt. It only addresses the vegetation, but not the climate or the factors for climate.



Correct! You are on a roll!

Option B

Even though the climate and vegetation of Sub-Saharan Africa varies as a result of latitude and human activity, they are still the two most important factors in determining the quality of life.

This statement gives an argument, and address all aspects of the writing prompt (topic, effect, factors). Notice how you do not have to go into detail, just give the reader a hint of what you will write about.

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5. In South Asia, globalization has played a big role in the developing economies of the region. Discuss the positive and negative effects of globalization in one South Asian country.

Option A

Globalization in India has offered solutions to poverty for some and created more severe poverty for others.

Option B

In India, globalization has meant new jobs for India's emerging middle class.

You are ready to write!

Option A

Globalization in India has offered solutions to poverty for some and created more severe poverty for others.

There is an opinion (it has offered solutions, it has created more severe poverty). It addresses the positive (solutions) and negative (poverty) effects.

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Practice. You will get there.


Option B

In India, globalization has meant new jobs for India's emerging middle class.

Again, this would be a perfect thesis statement, if the prompt only asked for the effects of globalization. The prompt, however, specifies positive and negative effects. This is only positive.



YOUR TURN!!

- You will now apply what you learned by writing your own thesis statements to a few writing prompts. 
- When reading back your thesis statements (to yourself), ask yourself a few questions.

Did I address all parts of the prompt?



or



no

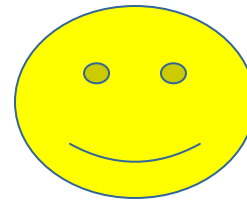
Did I address all parts of the prompt?



or



Can I argue against this statement?



or



Will I address all this in
my essay?



or



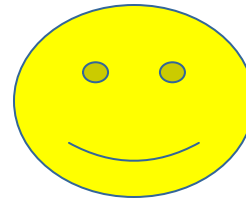
Is it grammatically correct?



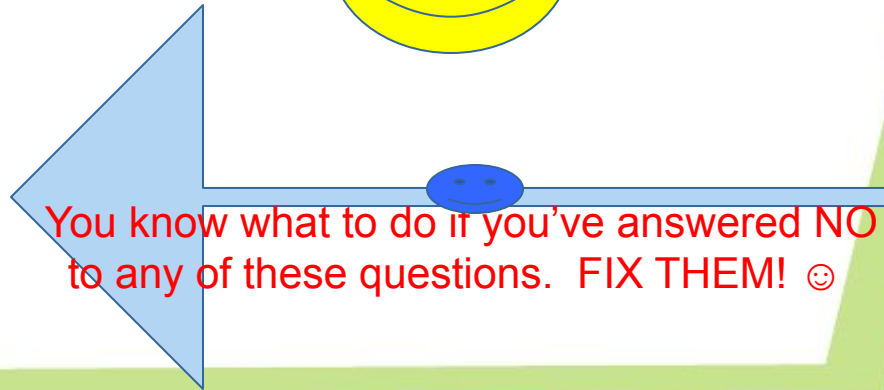
or



Is it clear and understandable?



or

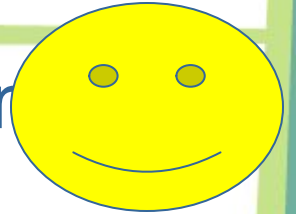


You know what to do if you've answered NO to any of these questions. FIX THEM! 😊

ASSIGNMENT

Yes, this is due
completed at the
end of class.

- Read the top half of your “Thesis Statement Practice” handout.
- Note the four (4) requirements for each of the topic questions provided.
- Look closely at the example completed for you.
- Refer back to this example when you complete the remainder of the assignment.



You can
do it!



HELP IS AVAILABLE...

- After you've completed the first question on your assignment, you may check to see if your answer is similar to one that the computer generates for you.
- Access the link entitled "Thesis/Outline Builder" on Mrs. Yarbar's Wikispaces page: myarbar.wikispaces.com/Research.

TCB!

FINAL THOUGHTS:

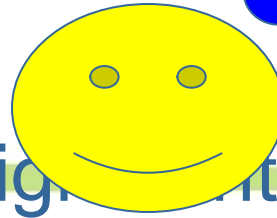


- You will use what you learned today to write the thesis statement for your research project next week.
- The ability to write thesis statements will assist you as you continue your education.

MAKE ME

PROUD!

See you
Monday!



- Tick. Tock. Give this assignment your full attention so you don't have homework. It is due at the end of class – completed.
- Once you reach this slide, close your computer until you are ready to check your thesis statements against the thesis statement builder.
- One more thing—all brains in the air!



WORK CITED

Even I use
easybib.com



Rodriguez, Mr. "Thesis Identifying Activity." *Upload & Share PowerPoint Presentations and Documents*. Web. 30 Mar. 2011.

<http://www.slideshare.net/mr_rodriguez23/thesis-identifying-activity>.