

# THESIS STATEMENTS

## WHAT IS A THESIS STATEMENT?

A thesis statement is the foundation of an essay and aids in narrowing down the topic to a specific focus. It informs readers exactly what an essay will achieve and includes the main message, central claim and specific opinions, points or ideas an essay will address. It is often a short, debatable statement of one or two sentences near the end of an introduction paragraph. A thesis statement is developed, explained and defended in the body paragraphs and conclusion of an essay by means of organized examples and evidence.

## WRITING AN EFFECTIVE THESIS STATEMENT

- What is the main aim of the project? A thesis should reflect the needs and rules of the assignment
  - **Expository essays** are used to explain an idea or issue to the reader
  - **Analytical essay** are used to evaluate an issue or an idea in depth and convey that to the reader
  - **Argumentative essays** are used to convince the audience that one argument is true using evidence and the author's opinion
- Questions to ask (and answer)
  1. **What** is the subject and point of view/opinion being explored?
  2. **Why** is this an important, interesting or persuasive topic to explore?
  3. **How** will these ideas be argued, analyzed or explained in the essay?

## THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- A thesis statement is an investigation of the importance of a topic, not the topic itself.
- Be specific/singular and include clear ideas that will be explored in the paper. Make a supportable claim that directly answers the question of a prompt.
- Use the thesis as a tool to help keep on topic while writing the paper. Test ideas by distilling them into one or two sentences.
- Topics may change in the writing process, so revise the thesis to fit the paper; don't make the paper fit the thesis.

## SEE ALSO:

- MUOWL's "Getting Started" [[Slides](#) & [Handout](#)]
- MUOWL's "Introductions" [[Handout](#)]

Schedule your online or in-person tutoring appointment today! (734) 432-5304 or [writingcenter@madonna.edu](mailto:writingcenter@madonna.edu)  
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