



Thesis Statements

Writing Center Presentation

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“Faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life” (NIV, Titus 1.2).

Developing a Strong Thesis Statement

- What is a Thesis Statement?
- Three-Part or Multi-Level Thesis Statements
- Thesis Statements by Category
- Beyond Stating the Obvious:

Exercises in Developing Thesis Statements

What is a Thesis Statement?

- Answers the question, “What is this paper trying to prove to its audience?”
- Compresses the critical crux of your paper into one sentence.
- Conveys your main argument in a nutshell.
- Uses specific language and specific ideas.
- Generates a multi-faceted argument.
- Appears in your paper’s introduction.

What is NOT a Strong Thesis Statement?

- NOT a statement of the inherently obvious.
- NOT a vague or ambiguous statement.
- NOT a simple factual sentence.
- NOT a statement that doesn't need any proof.
- NOT a statement that doesn't generate any argumentation whatsoever.
- Does NOT pass the “so what” test.

The “So What” Test

After writing a thesis statement, ask yourself,
“So what?”

Example: Funding sources are available for
college tuition.

(So what?)

Revision: Funding sources available for college
tuition make private universities more
affordable. **(So what, and so on)**

Activity: Choose the Most Effective Thesis Statement.

- My life is busy because I am a working student.
- As a working student, my life bifurcates into both the corporate world and the classroom.
- Contrary to popular belief, working students do okay in both worlds.
- A working student's life, bifurcated into the corporate world and the classroom, demonstrates how these dual roles enhance rather than detract from one another.

Activity: Choose the More Effective Thesis Statement.

- I like it when professors encourage us to talk.
- Interaction fosters collaborative learning.
- The most effective learning occurs when professors combine several teaching methods, such as lecture, discussion, and hands-on activities.
- A variety of approaches to teaching works best.
- Professors should accommodate a variety of learning styles.

Three-Part or Multi-Level Thesis Statements: Developing Your Thesis Statement for Specificity

One way to develop your thesis statement is by increasing its specificity in three parts.

Example: Jesus is the way.

Three-Part Revision:

Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life.

Three-Part Thesis Statements

- Working students benefit from their dual roles, which cultivate a mature sense of academic stewardship, practical wisdom about finances, and an appreciation for the value of both educational and vocational worlds.
- Collaborative learning enhanced by project-oriented activities, problem-solving in small groups, and frequent teacher-student interaction results in more effective retention of curricular material than lecture.

Turn the Following into Specific Three-Part Thesis Statements

- There is a way to solve world hunger.
- The government can assist the homeless by providing affording shelter.
- Sharing your faith is possible through different ways.

Thesis Statements by Category

- **Cause and Effect (If-then/because):**

If creative expression fosters learning, then students in all classrooms, regardless of level, can benefit from developing creative projects.

Because creativity is a proven benefit to learning, students should be encouraged to develop creative projects.

More Examples

- **Comparison and Contrast:**

While Christianity and Christian Science may appear to share superficial similarities, a closer examination reveals many differences in beliefs about Jesus, concepts of salvation, and the Bible's authority.

Examples of Thesis Statements by Category

- **Corrective:** Contrary to popular belief, ice cream is not junk food because it is a good source of calcium and milk protein.
- **Problem and Solution:** Although college tuition is expensive, various funding sources such as scholarships and low-interest loans can lower the cost.

More Examples

- **Advantages and Disadvantages:** Although ice cream is a source of calcium and milk protein, its high sugar and saturated fat content far outweigh any health benefits.
- **Analysis of Procedure:** Revising the application process by adding three steps during initial review would increase efficiency without sacrificing thoroughness.

Go Beyond the Obvious: Exercise #1 in Developing Thesis Statements

- Revise using the three-part model for specificity.

Prayer is good for everything.

Go Beyond the Obvious: Exercise #2 in Developing Thesis Statements

- Revise using the if-then or because model.

Consumers should be careful
about buying products over the
Internet.

Go Beyond the Obvious: Exercise #3 in Developing Thesis Statements

- Revise using the corrective model.

The world seems to think that
Christians have less fun than
non-Christians.

Go Beyond the Obvious: Exercise #4 in Developing Thesis Statements

- Revise using the comparison-contrast model.

Christianity and Judaism will be
discussed in this paper.

Go Beyond the Obvious: Exercise #5 in Developing Thesis Statements

- Revise using any combination of models.

A credit card has both advantages
and disadvantages.

Summary

- A thesis statement should go beyond stating the obvious.
- To develop a thesis statement, ask yourself the “so what” question until you’re satisfied.
- Apply the three-part thesis model and any combination of thesis models to enrich your thesis statement.

The Writing Center

- For more help with thesis statements, contact the Writing Center.
- Where: Heath 214
- What else: Thanks for your interest in our resources!