

THESIS STATEMENTS

SMART SHOP



WHAT IS A THESIS STATEMENT?

A one to two sentence summary of an essay's main point.

Answers the questions:



Why does this topic matter?

So what?

Appears at the end of the introduction in academic essays.

A THESIS IS NOT:
A STATEMENT OF FACT, A QUESTION, A DESCRIPTION, A SUMMARY OR AN OBSERVATION. IT IS NOT VAGUE.

A THESIS IS SPECIFIC AND FOCUSED. IT IS A MAP THAT TELLS THE READER WHERE YOUR PAPER IS HEADED



IDENTIFYING EFFECTIVE THESIS STATEMENTS

Evaluate the following.
Are these effective thesis statements?
Why or why not?

1. In this paper I will show how Poe uses symbolism in "The Masque of the Red Death" to develop the theme of death and decay.
2. We must save the whales.
3. High school students should be required to complete community service projects before graduation in order to increase their maturity and global awareness.



ANSWERS:

1. No. Too vague. Better: In "The Masque of the Red Death," Poe uses the symbolism of the clock, the stranger and the seventh room to develop the theme of death.
2. No. Too broad. Better: Because our planet's health depends upon biological diversity, we should save the whales.
3. Yes, it is clear where the essay is headed.

WRITING EFFECTIVE THESIS STATEMENTS

Your Thesis Combines

OBSERVATION

FACTS, EVIDENCE



ANALYSIS

ARGUMENT
EVALUATION

EXAMPLE:

POLLUTION IS BAD
FOR THE
ENVIRONMENT



CARBON USE
CONTRIBUTES
MOST TO
POLLUTION

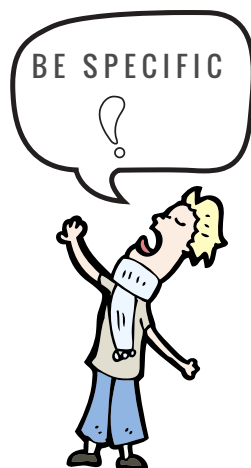
THESIS:
AMERICAS ANTI-POLLUTION EFFORTS SHOULD
FOCUS ON RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES.

YOUR TURN:
TOPIC AREA: TEXTING WHILE DRIVING

OBSERVATION

ANALYSIS

THESIS

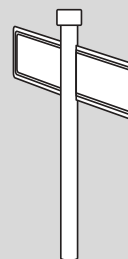


AVOID VAGUE WORDS SUCH AS

Good

Different

Interesting



REMINDERS

It's okay for a thesis to be two sentences. Don't squish too many ideas into a single sentence.

If the essay prompt is a question, your thesis is the answer to that question.

In academic essays, your instructor will look for your thesis at the end of the introduction.