

Thesis Statements

A thesis statement combines the purpose, audience, and topic into one sentence, the foundational building block for the rest of the paper. Each paragraph will refer back to the thesis, so it is very important to get it right.

Brainstorm

The thesis includes the main idea and the purpose of the paper.

Audience	Instructor and possibly other students
Purpose	To inform the audience on a chosen topic
Main idea and area of focus	Ex: Uniforms should be mandatory in all public schools to reduce costs for parents, eliminate competition among students, and help with discipline issues for teachers.

Now, try to brainstorm a topic in this chart:

Audience	
Purpose	
Main Idea and focus	

Audience will depend on the assignment, such as a letter to an editor or a presentation for a designated group. Another purpose could be to analyze a work of literature. In this case, choosing literary elements would set the basis for the thesis. Ex: in *The Grapes of Wrath*, John Steinbeck uses symbolism, characterization, and setting to show the effects of the Dust Bowl on American families.

Now, ask the following questions and write down some possible answers:

What is the point of this research?	
What will this paper accomplish?	
Is this perspective unique?	
Does the thesis express ideas to be covered?	
List several possibilities	

Writing the Thesis: The thesis statement will be a combination of audience, purpose, and topic. It informs the audience what to expect from the paper and focuses the information for the body to follow.

The first draft of a thesis statement should be written as the research is being done. Jot down ideas given by the sources to help focus in the important topics. A thesis statement is a work in progress until research is complete.

The thesis normally comes as the last sentence of an introductory paragraph as a preview to the paper and a transition to the body paragraphs, where ideas can be expanded with supporting facts, illustrations, and examples. The ideas given in the thesis become the topic sentences for the body paragraphs, and then a reworded thesis will come as the first sentence of the conclusion as a summary of the paper.

Characteristics of Good Thesis Statements:

Focused: The thesis statement focuses on the appropriate purpose, audience, and length of the paper. In other words, the thesis statement is neither too broad nor too narrow.

Opinionated: The thesis asserts a supportable opinion, not a fact.

Assertive: The thesis statement clearly defines that opinion on the topic.

United: The thesis ties together all of the ideas found in the paper.

Stated: The thesis statement is a statement, not a question.

Combine the main idea, the focus toward that idea, and the purpose of the paper into one strong sentence – the thesis.