

NAME: _____

OBJECTIVE: I can describe the purpose and traits of a successful thesis statement.

THESIS STATEMENTS ARE LIKE Menus

Why are English teachers so picky about thesis statements? Why do we care about how it is worded, where it belongs in a paragraph, how formally written it is, or whether or not you even have one?

A thesis statement is a single statement that is the focus of the entire writing piece; it is the main claim that we must prove (persuasive) or fact that we must explain (informative).

Why do we need one?

- **Imagine that you are a reader.** You've been hooked by the opening line, you've read the intro, and you can tell what the topic is, but you're still wondering: where exactly is this going?
- **Imagine that you're a teacher.** You have to evaluate (judge) whether or not your student can prove a thesis... but to do that, you have to be able to FIND the thesis without a doubt.
- **Imagine that you're sitting in an audience,** and the speaker keeps rambling about a topic. Won't you eventually want the speech to get to the POINT?
- **Imagine that you're reading an article.** If you can find out EARLY what the piece is REALLY about, won't that help you decide whether or not to keep reading?

THESIS STATEMENTS GIVE THE ENTIRE ESSAY PURPOSE. WITHOUT ONE, THE ESSAY DOESN'T MAKE A CLEAR POINT.

What do thesis statements do?

Can you tell me why the following analogies COULD make sense?

Why is a thesis statement LIKE...

<i>A conductor</i> (Of a band, choir, or orchestra)	
<i>A spine</i> (Of a human body)	
<i>A map</i> (Or even a GPS...)	
<i>A shocking news headline</i> (Or a dramatic title)	

Can you think of another one? Tell me why a thesis statement is like a...

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WHAT ARE THE RULES FOR THEM?

- **What:** a single sentence, either a fact (informative) or an opinion (argumentative)
- **Where:** the last sentence in the introduction paragraph (usually*)
- **Formally written:** based on the genre...
 - Informative:** the fact is stated objectively with carefully neutral, factual tone.
 - Persuasive:** the opinion is confidently stated; no wimpy "I think" or "I believe" statements.

*Please note that some teachers are completely fine with putting a thesis statement somewhere else. This is just a beginner's guideline. Always check with a teacher and/or boss if you're not sure.



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THESIS STATEMENTS ARE LIKE *Menus*

HOW EXACTLY DO YOU “PROVE” A THESIS?

In a way, thesis statements are like menus: a promise of what is to come.

However, readers (and eaters) still need the meal itself. A promise isn't enough; the chef/writer have to DELIVER, give us our money/time's worth, make us satisfied, and make us want to either keep reading or come back for more!

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS:

In restaurant meals...

The menu makes a promise about a specific meal: the ingredients AND the overall meal.

Free samples are sometimes given to persuade the buyer to purchase a meal or product.

Each course of the meal (appetizers, salads/soups, entrees) is served.

Waiters take away old plates, refill cups, and bring each new set of food.

Dessert is served, and the overall meal is complete; diners feel that the promise has been fulfilled.

In essays (and some articles)...

The thesis statement is a snapshot or promise of the overall argument to come.

The introduction previews the topic, the thesis, the context, and sometimes the reasons why.

The body paragraphs each prove a supporting point of the thesis overall.

Transitions connect the sentences WITHIN paragraphs as well as ACROSS the paragraphs themselves.

The conclusion paragraph paraphrases the thesis and the biggest supporting points (probably the topic sentences) to review and summarize.

SO, WHAT DOES A GOOD THESIS LOOK LIKE?

Thesis statements are ONE sentence and are specific, formal statements that preview what is to come.

Version #1: Not Great	Version #2: Better	Why...
Tornadoes are dangerous. They cause more monetary damage to communities than any other type of weather.	Tornadoes are dangerous because they cause more monetary damage to communities than any other type of weather.	One sentence only
I think that we should get to use our cell phones in class because they help with safety, studying, and communication.	Students should be allowed to use cell phones in class because they help with safety, studying, and communication.	No personal pronouns (I, you, he, she, it, we, they)
Country music is awesome.	Country music is a popular genre because of its instruments, its relatable topics, and its American heritage.	More specific (previews the reasons)
Damage is done to football players' brains every year.	Football is America's most dangerous sport due to the increase in concussions and long-term damage.	Second version is clearer and makes a claim



PRACTICE: YOUR TURN!

Is your thesis...

- One sentence only?
- Clearly stating the main opinion and/or fact?
- Previewing the reasons why?
- Formal (no personal pronouns)?